

Retailer helps business owner impact her community

She blended the ingredients for her instant batter in her garage and only supplied to small *Corner Joe* Fish and Chips shops until a partnership with the Shoprite Group helped her fulfill a long-held dream.

Zuzana (Zuzie) Van De Venter, co-owner of Batter Master, became an entrepreneur to improve people's lives in her community: "My life's goal has been to make a difference in society and to those around me. It is because of the business that I get from the Shoprite Group that I am able to employ magnificent human beings who come from very tough circumstances and would not normally have had a chance to earn a good salary," explains Zuzie.

One of these "magnificent humans" is Lucy Ledwaba, Zuzie's right-hand woman, who started working for her 10 years ago as a domestic. Lucy would also help Zuzie mix batter in her garage, but these days she is the manager at the Batter Master factory in Alberton.

"I never thought I'd end up where I am today. I was a domestic worker and am a single parent to my two children, but because of my position at Batter Master I not only put food on the table for them, I'm also able to pay college and school fees, and care for my extended family," says Lucy, who is one of nine permanent employees at Batter Master.

Zuzie's business started supplying instant batter to Shoprite and Checkers in the greater Gauteng area in 2013. Her batter is used to coat baby hake prior to frying at the in-store delis. Over the years Zuzie and her team have grown their business with the retailer to the point where they now supply 20 to 25 tons of batter a month to Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets across South Africa.

"I don't think words can do justice to how deeply grateful I am. Every single morning when I wake up, I'm aware that the business I get from the Shoprite Group is the reason that my staff are able to improve their quality of life," she adds.

Originally from Slovakia, Zuzie's family moved to South Africa 45 years ago. Together with her husband she bought Batter Master from a family friend in 2006, after a 15-year long career in the food industry.

"One of the greatest lessons I've learnt in business is that with determination, commitment and hard work I can do anything."

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CAPTION: Zuzie Van De Venter and Lucy Ledwaba from Batter Master supply instant batter to fresh food departments in Shoprite and Checkers stores throughout South Africa.