

## **Bakery gets lifeline with Checkers order**

An order from Checkers for bakery goods provided a lifeline and growth opportunity to a long-established bakery whose orders came to an abrupt stop during lockdown.

Facing an uncertain future after lockdown halted its orders to the hospitality and travel industries, Cape Town bakery [Pie in the Sky](#) started to urgently look for opportunities to diversify its business in a bid to keep going and retain its staff.

“We started cold calling and reached out to the Shoprite Group soon after the hard lockdown last year when our base business was decimated, as our major focus - and all our clients - were in large food service sectors such as hospitality and airlines,” explains Sergio Luiz, commercial manager of Pie in the Sky.

“From the get-go, the buyers were so willing to engage, and we introduced them to new products, mainly in frozen bread and bakery goods, from bread rolls to artisan breads. Together with Checkers, we developed products that helped them drive efficiencies and drive down cost and waste in the in-store bakeries.”

Pie in the Sky started supplying Checkers in mid-2020.

“It has given us a new lease on life. We have been able to diversify our business and the Shoprite Group has given us confidence in the retail sector that we didn’t have before.”

Importantly, the partnership helped Pie in the Sky to save jobs. Initially, during lockdown, the company went from producing tens of thousands of products each day to just a few hundred to distribute to NGOs it supported, and there was uncertainty over what would happen to employees. Because of the Checkers order, it did not have to retrench. “In fact, we have started to reemploy again. This partnership has been a job saver and job creator at the same time”.

The company has since extended the range it supplies to the Group, which was looking for a supplier of fruit cakes nationally. “We were also able to tender for a national project and have set up a separate facility to manufacture fruitcakes for Checkers for Christmas 2021,” Luiz says.

“This partnership has given renewed impetus to our operations and shown us a more sustainable path for business growth into the future. We look forward to growing our relationship with Checkers.”

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