

Women instrumental to success of Africa's largest retailer

The Shoprite Group was the first retailer to celebrate the enormous contribution of South African women to society when Government announced National Women's Day in 1996 when it introduced a significant campaign that ran for 17 years to celebrate women, the nationally acclaimed Shoprite Checkers Women of the Year Awards.

More than 25 years later the Group continues to champion women - employees, customers, business partners and community workers. It invests in and uplifts women through various business and community initiatives, including skills development and training programmes, as it recognises that the development and support of women serves as a significant contribution to stable economies and effective community development.

Almost 65% of the Group's more than 145 000 employees are women who serve its customers, drive its trucks, innovate and are employed in leadership positions across the business. Here are some of their stories:

"One of the things I value most about being part of the Shoprite team is that we are provided with opportunities to continually further our careers," says Nqobile Zwakala (37), who joined the retailer as a learner in 2009 and is now the Meat Market Manager at Checkers Cornubia.

"In February this year I was part of the intake for [Shoprite's Master Meat Artisan Programme](#), a 12-month project that is internationally endorsed. I am excited to be improving my technical skills in meat operations, and to one day become a Senior Meat Market Manager," explains Zwakala.

"Many people did not think that a woman can do the things my job requires, never mind eventually lead a Meat Market Team, but I enjoy being able to prove them wrong."

Thobeka Masuka (26) is a Cashier at Shoprite Eshowe. She was unemployed for a year before her 2021 enrolment in the YES programme, which is aimed at creating workplace opportunities South African youth.

"I really enjoyed the programme. The highlight for me was when I got the opportunity to work on the till as a cashier and in February this year I received permanent employment," Masuka said. "I am so excited to work for Africa's biggest retailer and I hope one day to become a manager."

Nando Tembe (46), Deputy Divisional Manager at Usave, has been with the company for 25 years after starting her career as a till packer.

"I was determined to develop and build my career, so I signed up for internal training courses and programmes and obtained qualifications in Retail Business and Retail Management from the University of the Witwatersrand."

"My passion for retail helped me work my way up the career ladder. I can relate to the employees on the ground. I enjoy sharing my knowledge and experience and developing those employees who yearn for growth. I get so much joy out of my job."

Tembe is especially cognisant of the opportunities for women in the Group. "It is good that women are given a chance to get the positions we are getting now, because we are more than capable of getting the job and have proven that we can do it."

END