

Massmart helps grow young entrepreneurs

Lending small business a hand

Massmart has entered into a partnership with the Umsobomvu Youth Fund to create an enterprise development venture that will benefit unemployed black youths. The venture, known as the Massmart Umsobomvu Youth Development Fund, has been established with an initial R1m contribution from Massmart and a matching contribution from Umsobomvu.

The money in the fund will be used to establish unemployed youths in micro or entry-level franchise businesses. One of the fund's first initiatives has been to help a number of youths purchase Hot Dog Café franchises, many of which operate outside our stores.

What does it take to run your own business?

"Consistency, reliability, and perseverance - together with elementary communication skills - are the fundamental attributes necessary to operate any business," says Derek Smith, Managing Director of Hot Dog Café. "The Hot Dog Café carts are an entry level business format franchise. Potential franchisees are interviewed by a panel of experienced operations personnel and then undertake LAB (Learning Ability Battery) tests. Through this process, we can select suitable applicants, and the next step is a

six-month training programme." Initially, entrepreneurs in the making undertake theoretical training. They are taught skills and given information which add to their product knowledge, and they learn about customer service and are given the know-how for cash flow management, explains Smith. "After this, comes practical training, where they trade on a cart under the supervision of an experienced operator." This gives young entrepreneurs a chance to prove - both to the franchise, but also, importantly, to themselves - their reliability, responsibility and operating skills.

It is at this point that the new franchisees are able to purchase their own cart by using the funds from the Massmart Umsobomvu Youth Development Fund.

Why Massmart stores are great locations

"Dion, Game, Makro and Builders Warehouse stores," notes Smith, "are all well recognised and respected brands. They attract high foot traffic, especially at lunchtime. The hot dog, meanwhile, is a convenience product suited to on-the-go customers." Massmart stores benefit by providing convenient fast foods to our customers and the young entrepreneurs are able to make an

income by selling quality products in a clean, safe and shopper-filled environment.

It's a winning formula, and it is expected that as many as forty new businesses will be established at Massmart sites over the next twelve months. ■



The Massmart Umsobomvu Youth development Fund is helping set up young entrepreneurs in their own businesses.

If you know someone who may be interested in this initiative, contact Derek Smith on 012 664-7213, or derek@hotdogcafe.co.za