

I Laaik it local

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Pizza Hut will follow a fast paced growth and penetration strategy in South Africa and on the continent.

This was according to GM of Pizza Hut Africa, Randall Blackford. He was addressing the celebrities, dignitaries from Yum! Brands and the media, both editors and bloggers, at the brand relaunch in South Africa this week with the opening of its first store located in the Honeydew Village Shopping Centre, in northern Johannesburg.



Randall Blackford

Emerging markets

Pizza Hut is a property of Yum! Brands, which also owns KFC, a brand well-known to South Africans, and Taco Bell. Like Yum! Brands' other properties, Pizza Hut is a global leader in its category.

Blackford describes Pizza Hut's return to the country as a huge opportunity. "We are focusing on emerging markets. Half our income is from emerging markets and therefore expanding on the continent with pizza makes sense."

Scott Berger, CEO of Pizza Hut worldwide, through a recording added to this saying that the continent is vastly underpenetrated when it comes to pizza and that Pizza Hut will be following an aggressive development strategy on the continent.

"South Africa is just the beginning. We are looking at Zambia and Angola next. We consider South Africa and Africa as the greatest growth opportunity globally."

The growth of the country's middle class has been huge and it is this market Pizza Hut is targeting. Alastair Gledhill, chief development officer, Pizza Hut, sources and secures suitable locations for Pizza Hut stores. He explains the rationale behind the Honeydew store location. "We aim to serve the population of the country and the middle class is the sweet spot. The brand positioning is aspirational, but affordable. Honeywell was the perfect location because it is area where you find a high density of dual income middle class families. This particular location has another element that we consider to be crucial, and that is that it is convenient for consumers to get to and access."



The brand will roll out more stores in similar environments, Blackford adds. "Our stores play a key role in the marketing of our brand. Pizza Hut is an inclusive brand and for everyone. We will get involved and connect with the local communities our stores serve. We will also do sampling and utilise billboards."

Offer great value

Since Pizza Hut was last in the country, the world of pizza changed a lot. Globally the trend is that people eat pizza at home, and this is also true for South Africa. "The last time we were in South Africa we were a "dine in" brand, not a delivery brand. Therefore delivery will be a key focus for them, as will online."

He says they realise that they are not the first pizza brand in the country, and they will not be the cheapest, so they decided they have to be the best. This, he says, means a number of things. "To be the best we will serve the best food in stores that are warm and inviting, with open kitchens and pizza board is the actual size of the pizza, digital menu boards as well as a digital signage that lets you know your order is ready and free Wi-Fi for 30 minutes."

The brand is global, but he says it has a local emphasis. "Apart from using local language - such as LAaik it local", we have localised our menu so our pizzas have lots of meat and cheese for the South African. We even offer a boerewors pizza!"



A lesson that Pizza Hut has picked up from its big brother, KFC is offer great value. "So that's exactly what we are doing. Our pizzas are reasonably priced and we have great deals for feeding families and offer a number of side orders such as fries (chips), deserts, bread sticks and chicken."

Like its elder brother, Pizza Hut is also a brand that likes to give back and Pizza Hut will deliver the Hope Campaign, by adding R5 to your meal and making a contribution to MES, an organisation that assists young adults' transit to adulthood.

Pizza Hut offers South Africans family fun, says Blackford. "Many South Africans have rich memories of Pizza Hut - their first date, a birthday celebration, and so on. We want to continue building these memories with South African families."

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

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