

Pick n Pay Clothing to boost local sourcing

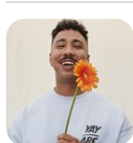
Pick n Pay Clothing's localisation drive sees the retailer targeting 60% locally-sourced products by 2028. Local sourcing currently represents 40% of its total clothing sales and the localisation strategy has allowed the fashion retailer to reduce order lead times and maintain high levels of availability for customers.



Pick n Pay Clothing x Julia collection. Source: Supplied

Proving 'local is lekker', Pick n Pay Clothing reported a 21% increase in sales last year by gaining market share across several women, men and childrenswear categories. Over two years, through Pick n Pay's localisation initiative, over 700 jobs have been created through the supply chain.

"The pandemic has taught us to be more resourceful. We have always supported local production but it has pushed us and our local suppliers to develop and source more products locally that were not readily available according to our customers' needs," says Hazel Pillay, general manager for Pick n Pay Clothing.



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Lauren Hartzenberg 2 Jun 2022



Building supplier capacity

Pillay adds that to increase local sourcing in the coming years, the company will continue to empower local suppliers to produce locally by building their capacity, as well as investigate opportunities in fabric sourcing. "This will help us grow local production of clothing that have typically been imported, such as high winter product lines."

Pick n Pay started working with a small supplier in Durban during the pandemic to meet the massive demand for slippers which became the unofficial footwear for working from home.

Pillay explains: “Similar to many businesses, one of our suppliers, Sneaker Factory, was impacted during lockdown and struggled to survive during this period. Fixed expenses continued to grow with limited income but the owner, Rafiq Mahomed, identified an opportunity in locally produced slippers and converted part of his factory to manufacture indoor slippers and approached us.

“We initially bought 22,000 pairs and this has grown to over 160,000 pairs over the winter season.”

Uplifting local designers

The localisation drive has provided opportunities for collaborations with local designers, including through [Pick n Pay Clothing's Futurewear project](#) in partnership with Gavin Rajah. Now in its third year, the collaborative initiative sees the retailer partner with up-and-coming creatives to design exclusive, yet affordable ranges for Pick n Pay Clothing customers, while encouraging designers to think innovatively, but in a commercial environment.

It aims to foster growth in the local clothing industry while providing customers with greater access to affordable designer collections.



Pick n Pay Clothing x Julia collection. Source: Supplied

“All the ranges are locally produced. The 2022 collab ranges will launch with a range by Julia Buchanan in September, which has also been made with recycled fabrics to drive sustainability,” explains Pillay.

The 2022 Pick n Pay Clothing x Julia collection incorporates brighter, bolder colours and imagery inspired by Cape Town's iconic natural elements including Lion's Head, the Atlantic Coastline and palm trees. Furthering the collaborative spirit of the

initiative, Buchanan worked with local artist and architect, Sarah Alderman from Sarch Designs, to create the print for her 2022 collection.

This will be Buchanan's third limited edition collection with Pick n Pay Clothing. Since sliding onto the racks at the retailer, she has expanded her Julia brand into apparel and accessories and showcased her garments on the runway for the first time.



Sarah Alderman and Julia Buchanan. Source: Supplied

Through this collaboration, Buchanan says she has had the opportunity to share her designs with new, and wider, audiences and helped developed a following of strong women looking for interesting pieces of clothing.

"I feel more comfortable working in the commercial space and have learnt a great deal about flexibility and designing for a wider audience. Every year I learn more about our approach to structure and design, and it has helped grow my brand," says Buchanan.

Sustainable manufacturing

Pick n Pay is also working closely with suppliers to increase the sustainability practices used in the production of the ranges. Forty-two percent of the upcoming 2022 Summer collection in stores will contain sustainable practices, up from just 22% for the winter collection.

Practices include rainwater harvesting, recycling of preproduction waste, water recycling and using solar energy. Around 70% of Pick n Pay's main suppliers include one or more of these practices.



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"Some of our suppliers have implemented incredible practices to limit their impact on the environment. For instance, 80% of the denim in Pick n Pay stores is waterwise as suppliers employ water and energy saving technology in their production," explains Pillay.

There is also a strong push to manufacture with natural resources. “We are committed to sourcing our cotton more sustainably and through the Better Cotton initiatives, we are growing the ranges using organic cotton that is sustainably sourced,” she adds.

Pick n Pay Clothing is a strategic priority under the company’s new Ekuseni strategy. More space will be given to the division in supermarkets in addition to 73 new store openings planned for the next year. “As we drive growth in our clothing division, we want to empower local suppliers along the way. This will in turn help us support the local economy with great job opportunities,” concludes Pillay.

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