

CCBSA's innovative route to market creating opportunities for female entrepreneurs

Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA) is one of the companies that have realised the benefits of utilising communities and informal markets as an alternative distribution channel. Taking this route to market, the company has created opportunities for entrepreneurs in distribution while also connecting their smaller customer base through their Local Distribution Programme (LDP).



Verda Maluleka stands next to her stock at her LDP

Since inception, this programme has grown in leaps and bounds and has seen an impressive growth of female-led LDPs across the business.

The LDP programme was started in 2011 as a means to empower upcoming entrepreneurs who are looking for business opportunities in the community by providing them with the necessary support to become “logistic” partners to the business. These individuals are properly equipped with training in customer service, stock management, IT systems and financial literacy, all with the aim of ensuring that the business’s products are delivered timeously and in an efficient manner.

Verda Maluleka, an LDP owner in Louis Trichardt grabbed the opportunity with both hands when she was still a sales team leader in the business. “I am a very business minded individual and as soon as this programme was announced, I knew that it was my calling. With this transition, I was still going to be part of the Coca-Cola family, yet be able to pursue my dreams of being an entrepreneur,” says Maluleka.

Embracing challenges of all magnitudes

The role is exciting but Maluleka admits to there being challenges, such as creating a greater awareness of this innovative route to market which caters to customers in more congested areas such as townships. However, women such as Maluleka and other LDP’s in the business have come to embrace challenges of all magnitudes and changes that are thrown in their direction that through the support of their peers and the business, they will continue to make their mark in the logistics space.

Overall, the programme has produced some extraordinary results since inception which include the establishment of 126 LDP's, 45 job opportunities created to date, 93% equity partner appointments and 20% black female LDP appointments. The business looks forward to growing the number of entrepreneurs that have decided to form part of this programme and partnership and will continue to support them, ensuring that they continue to thrive in their respective communities.

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