

From street vendor to small business owner

By [Beverley Klein](#)

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Underwear brand, Jockey, has partnered with Texcon Hawkers Forum and Business Support KwaZulu Natal, to make street vendors' dreams come true.

They've implemented the New Venture Creation learnership programme, which will equip the vendors with knowledge on how to run a business and give them experience to enhance their employment opportunities.



We spoke with Jockey's marketing associate, Natalie Bennie, to find out more about the initiative and the importance of CSI to the brand.

■ **Where did the idea for the initiative come from?**

Bennie: Jockey saw the ladies coming to the shop and having to queue outside for the goods. Many of these hawkers are consistent Jockey customers. We saw the need for them and we wanted to make their purchasing process a lot easier than having to queue outside the factory. These hawkers have trusted our brand enough to want to sell it, and we want to be just as loyal to them as they are to us.

■ **How were the "hawkers" selected?**

Bennie: We requested Texcon to make the selection. They spent a week at our factory shop talking to various hawkers. We identified who these hawkers were, and initiated an interview process. In terms of the learnership – this was based on an application and qualifications and this was the responsibility of Texcon.

■ ***What are some of the challenges facing small business owners in South Africa?***

Bennie: Two of the biggest issues that small businesses are faced with are 1. Marketing elements and 2. Cash flow. We are committed to assisting our selected hawkers with marketing elements that will aid their businesses. We will provide special packaging of the garments, as well as other branding elements associated with our brand. In terms of purchasing stock, they will be able to buy all their garments from the Jockey factory shop, making it affordable to not only buy garments, but also to make a profit.

■ ***What will participants learn from the New Venture Creation learnership programme and the Texcon Hawkers Forum Initiative? And how are they different?***

Bennie: From the New Venture Creation learnership programme 20 selected candidates will learn the necessary business skills and be provided with the experience needed to open up better self-employment or employment opportunities. Being a part of the Texcon Hawkers Forum Initiative has other benefits. The difference between the two is that the New Venture Creation Learnership Programme allows these 20 hand-picked and carefully selected street vendors with an opportunity to acquire a qualification through the programme. All will benefit from the marketing elements and the discounts.

■ ***What will happen when the participants graduate?***

Bennie: They will remain part of Texcon, and they will be assisted with registering their businesses. They will be more empowered with their new qualifications, and businesses, which will ultimately create a brighter future for these candidates.

■ ***How important is a CSI strategy for companies today?***

Bennie: CSI is as important as any other strategic initiative in order to be a real contributor to company growth, and allows our company to constantly contribute to the real needs of communities that we operate in. CSI projects are vital for sustainable contribution to the development and economic growth of the country.

The success of the country is heavily reliant on companies getting involved in CSI – we have the ability and the power to embrace an opportunity to provide a better future for those members of community who truly can make our country a better place.

The benefits of CSI for companies is that it enhances the company image, as well as improves the relationships with its communities. It improves loyalty and involvement amongst the employees, and provides a stable economic and social environment, enhancing the long term survival of company, and ultimately, it allows for strong brand identity.

■ ***What does Mandela Month mean to you?***

Bennie: Mandela Month reminds us of the importance of assisting the less fortunate. It reminds us that if we have the power, resources and the opportunity to give back to communities, allowing them the opportunity to 'pay it forward' in the future, then we have done something to make this country a better place, together.

ABOUT BEVERLEY KLEIN

Beverley Klein is the editor of the Marketing Media South Africa section on Bizcommunity.com. With a background in journalism and historical studies, she's dived into the world of industry news, curating content, writing and interviewing thought leaders. She's often spotted in a forest on the weekend and rarely seen without a camera. Follow [@BevCPT](#).

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