

FreshStop eyes growth with launch of two new food brands

FreshStop has announced that two new branded food lines have been added to its food stable. The new additions, Hot Dog Bar and Africaz, join the existing lines, Crispy Chicken, Grill to Go, Hooked On Fish, Doughnut Delite and Biltong Bars.



There are currently six Hot Dog Bar outlets nationally with an additional two stores planned for 2018, and figures show that these outlets work particularly well at FreshStop at Caltex forecourt sites that have a car wash and customer demand for a low-value quality quick meal.

The latest line, Africaz, was launched in three FreshStop stores in KwaZulu-Natal. The flame-grilled chicken concept specialises in grilled chicken pieces and a burger offering served with its unique Africaz sauce and has shown great value with sales in excess of 60% of store turnover and has added phenomenal value to FreshStop's overall business.

In the press release sent to Bizcommunity, FreshStop says the introduction of branded food lines within a convenience retail environment not only builds customers' affinity with that brand but figures prove that where a quality and trusted food line is introduced, basket size increases.

"Convenience retail brands must have a solid food strategy to be successful and our selection of fast food concepts with low costs of entry and shared operational expenses form part of the future view of our business," says Michael Joubert, APC brand manager at FreshStop.

Crispy Chicken success

The retailer launched its first in-house fast food brand, Crispy Chicken, in 2014 and it quickly gained brand traction and customer support. "Chicken is still the biggest food driver in SA and our Crispy Chicken brand has proved how popular this protein is and what a difference it can make to a business' bottom line," says Joubert.

"We currently have 41 Crispy Chicken outlets nationally and we plan to roll-out an additional 8 to 10 outlets this year. We have recently revitalised the menu to offer our customers the most popular and best value lines. At the recent store opening at FreshStop Cookhouse in the Eastern Cape where a Crispy Chicken outlet was introduced, the store experienced a 250% increase in turnover.

According to Ali Gafoor, store retailer at FreshStop Sea View in Strandfontein, the Crispy Chicken outlet has impacted his business enormously. Gafoor says the brand has had a positive impact on the outlet's basket size with an average increase, post the initial wave, of about 20% weekly.



FreshStop's 2nd most popular food line, Grill to Go, has 10 outlets nationally with 8 more planned this year. With a 57% year-on-year growth, the Grill to Go brand offers customers a healthier grilled option such as grilled chicken and beef burgers and is in some instances outperforming Crispy Chicken in terms of growth.

Meanwhile, with eight stores nationally, the Hooked on Fish and chips offering will be refreshing its strategy and product offering, and turning towards a more 'old school' methodology of selling fish, chips and calamari in the next few months.

FreshStop says Doughnut Delite complements its Seattle and Lavazza coffee offering and fills the confectionary gap. "Doughnuts work so well with coffee and it's an easy product for customers to pick up and go. With margins of up to 60% the outlets are doing well, so we're planning to roll out eight to ten outlets this year to add to our existing ten," explains Joubert.



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Basket of food options

FreshStop says its approach gives franchisees a basket of food offerings to choose from to suit their specific customer base and location, at affordable entry costs. "Our store retailers want to be in a position to offer their customers new local brands and food lines to attract further shoppers and drive sales. Retailers can select various concepts that complement one another, such as a Seattle Coffee and Doughnut Delite; or a selection of two proteins such as Crispy Chicken and Hooked On Fish to cover various target markets," says Joe Boyle, director at FreshStop.

He continues, "Over the years, we have learned that where there is a focused food strategy, the brand will do well. Convenience food is growing across all retail sectors and it is currently contributing to about 25-30% of our business where we have food service offers, and we know that our core food service lines will be the growth point for our Re-Fresh and new store conversion strategy.

"Our in-house brands are a business within a business and we need to enforce that our customers get the best possible product each and every time."

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