

# Shoprite's celebration of their top suppliers

The Shoprite Group's annual Supplier of the Year Awards recognise the valuable contribution suppliers make to the success of the Group.

Finalists across 10 categories are evaluated on criteria such as the extent to which they had contributed towards the retailer's growth and improved earnings, their stockholding and service levels, the efficiency of their administration processes, and the manner in which they provide support at store level.

The 2022 category winners are:

- Groceries: Futurelife
- Health & Beauty: Colgate-Palmolive Company
- Perishables: Eskort
- Beverages/Liquor & Wine: South African Breweries
- SMME: Browns Foods
- Fruit & Vegetables: Wildeklawer
- Butcheries: Malu Pork
- Sustainability: Infection Protection Products
- Convenient Food & Private Labels: Feinschmecker Deli Meats
- General Merchandise: Duracell



Winner in the Sustainability category, Infection Protection Products – Jungle Jim.

In South Africa, the Group spent R18.7 billion on black owned suppliers in the past financial year, with R12.6 billion allocated to black women-owned suppliers, up from R8.5 billion in 2021.

Husband-and-wife-owned small business **Browns Foods** was among a host of innovative and outstanding suppliers honoured by the Shoprite Group at its annual Supplier of the Year Awards.



“Myself and my husband, who is now COO, approached the Shoprite Group with basically a dream.”

Mabel Akinlabi  
co-founder of Browns Foods



Mabel Akinlabi from Browns Foods, winner in the SMME category with the winner of the Sustainability category, Annette Devenish from Infection Protection Products, at the Group's 2022 Supplier of the Year Awards.

Born out of a spontaneous catering decision and the result of many months of experimentation, determination and hard work, a husband-and-wife team from Johannesburg has successfully built a frozen convenience food business – starting with their wildly popular Browns Corn Dog range, currently available at Checkers.

Although Mabel and Wale Akinlabi now supply their Browns Corn Dogs to more than 100 Checkers stores around South Africa, the journey to this milestone started humbly – in the Akinlabi home kitchen.



A child's birthday party, a kitchen full of excited and hungry pre-teens – and a spontaneous decision all led to the existence of Browns Foods.

Corndogs are quick, convenient, filling – and delicious. The perfect lunch and snack times meal. Lunch times will never be the same again.

South Africa's only Corndog factory brings awesome flavours to homes across the nation.



Proud winner of the Shoprite Group Supplier Awards 2022, SMME category.



BROWNS CORN DOGS,  
**BECAUSE LUNCH NEEDS SOME FUN.**



**ORDER NOW** ▶

**Awesome Original**

Few things are better than the original, made with love, care and intended to be super satisfying. Our corndogs are made with a delicious spice blend, great quality meat and nutritious yellow maize.

**Jalapeno Cheese**

Warm and fragrant Chicken Jalapeno cheese is going to give you all the thrills. A delicious, spicy fun and exciting way to enjoy your favourite snack with a party in your mouth.

**Creamy Cheese**

Chicken and cheese are best friends and come together to create a creamy, smooth fun experience. We used silky, melt-in-your-mouth cheddar cheese to bring you joy on a stick.



**Browns Foods**

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<https://brownsfoods.co.za/>



“During our daughter’s 11th birthday party I yanked out corn dogs that I was making. The kids loved these things, and I asked them all: ‘If we make these would you ask your parents to buy you some?’ and the answer was an emphatic ‘Yes!’,” says Mabel.

Off the back of this response, they founded Browns Foods in 2019 with the single corn dog product. While testing and perfecting their recipe, they approached the Shoprite Group and struck a deal with buyer Promise Mpele.

“Promise said that they try their best to support young black business, and they really really have. He held our hand the whole way and took us through the entire process,” says Wale Akinlabi, co-founder of Browns Foods.

The couple, both with successful backgrounds in broadcasting, were entirely new to the world of food production and retail. Because of this, they had a raft of questions for their buyer from pricing to product development.

“We asked what pricing would be fair, we wanted to find out what regions we should go into, what distributors we should use, do they like our packaging, what do consumers like ... Information that we could’ve learnt painfully, but our buyer held our hands through the process,” says Mabel.

From a single corn dog made and presented on a chopstick, the two then built up their business over the course of a year, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. They imported equipment from the United States, set up a factory, and refined the recipe.



“If you have a brilliant idea, tell someone else about it and make yourself accountable to someone. Now it’s out there, so you’ve got to do something about it.”  
Mabel Akinlabi



dogs in three different flavour variations – Awesome Original, Jalapeño Cheese, and Creamy Cheese.

“Kids love the fact that it’s salty, sweet and creamy in your mouth. It doesn’t feel legal, even though it’s full of meat and mom knows it’ll keep you full for a long time. And it’s on a stick – it’s so fun to eat!” says Mabel.

As a result of the success of Browns Corn Dogs, the duo are looking to expand their range, starting with a fully vegan corn dog offering.

Mabel and Wale have lots of advice for other budding entrepreneurs looking at moving into this space – but Mabel says the most important thing is to make yourself accountable. **SR**

Getting the corn dogs to market took plenty of hard work, grit, determination and positivity.

“Retail is a whole new sector for us. We now love it, and we’ve learnt a whole lot, but it’s been challenging. We’ve been received really well by the public,” says Mabel.

The work paid off, and by the end of 2020 they were able to supply more than 100 Checkers stores with their now famous corn





Infection Protection Products' Sani-touch has been named the Shoprite Group's Supplier of the Year in the Sustainability category. This is the first year that Sustainability has been recognised as a category in Shoprite's supplier awards.

Wipes have become an environmental hazard globally, falling into the category of single use plastics. The glib assumption is that it would be far easier to simply issue a ban on these products to keep them out of land fill. However, as Sani-touch Marketing Director Annette Devenish explains, not only would this result in job losses but pre-saturated wipes play an important role.

"Pre-saturated wipes have proved invaluable in the fight against viruses and bacteria, and especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The challenge, however, is to ensure that the used wipes don't end up in landfill. To ensure this goal we started investigating how this could be achieved."

Their research led them to Katlehong-based entrepreneur Hudon Diphofa who established a business called Structural Poly Plastics after he was retrenched in 2020 during the pandemic.

## Infection Protection Products Sani-touch Saniwipes wins the Shoprite Group's inaugural Sustainability Award

The company also discovered that by making small changes to its wipes and putting appropriate processes in place, it could ensure that they could be repurposed into long-lasting and durable products that have value to society.

It was just over a year ago that Sani-touch launched its green 100% recyclable Saniwipes as part of its drive to recycle used wipes into plastic pallets for use in its own factories and warehouses.

When the idea was pitched to Sanjeev Raghur, Sustainability Manager at the Shoprite Group, he embraced the idea. Fast forward a year later, and all the used green trolley wipes at the entrance



# SHOPRITE SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

# WINNER 2022

Sustainability category:

Awarded to

**INFECTION PROTECTION PRODUCTS**  
**Sani-touch**

FROM SANIWIPES TO PALLETS, BENCHES, JUNGLE GYMS ETC  
SUPPORT RECYCLING | SUPPORT ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT



Contact us - we can help YOUR store to create a circular economy.



of Shoprite and Checkers stores are being collected, sorted and recycled into pallets, garden benches, bird feeders and even jungle gyms which are donated to under-resourced schools.



“The more we travel down this road the more uses we are finding for repurposed plastics and the more value we are discovering in recycling and upcycling,” reports Devenish.

“Rather than banning used wipes, the repurposed products are creating jobs while the repurposed products are serving a useful purpose. What started as an infection control wipe, introduced to protect the transmission of bugs and bacteria from runny-nosed children, has resulted in, amongst other products, jungle gyms being made from those same wipes. It has been particularly gratifying to see the excitement on young children’s faces when we deliver a new jungle gym to their school.”



Devenish says Infection Protection Products is incredibly grateful to the Shoprite Group for embarking on this journey with it. “The Shoprite Group is very serious about its sustainability strategy and so to be recognised as the Sustainability Award winner at its annual Supplier of the Year Awards is a real honour,” she says.

For Infection Protection Products and its Sani-touch range of products, the journey is still in its infancy. “We hope that in time other retailers will join us on this journey. Together we can make a meaningful difference to sustainability – recycle more, upcycle more, empower more people and create more jobs,” she concludes. **SR**



## Shoprite and Checkers help create 30 more jobs with new toys from recycled material

Proudly South African business, Hope Sonic, has created 30 new permanent jobs by expanding its Zeus toy range in Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets, just in time for the festive season.

The small enterprise supplies Shoprite and Checkers with a range of toys made from recycled materials, including a digger, dump truck and various ride-on bikes.

Hope Sonic now employs around 100 people – of which 70% are women – following the expansion of its range from one to 16 toys and anticipates further growth in 2023.

The company is located in Blackheath, Cape Town, and employees live within walking distance of its factory.

“Most of our employees reside in Happy Valley, Blue Downs,” says David Damon, Managing Partner at Hope Sonic. “We believe in empowerment and teaching our employees. All training is in house on the job training.”

The Zeus Mx2 ride-on bike is made from 100% recycled plastic, which amounts to approximately 20 milk bottles per bike. The dump trucks and diggers are made from 60% and 50% recycled material, respectively.

With their Toy Price Guarantee, valid for in-store purchases between 28 November and 25 December 2022, Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets again beat any toy price by 10% if a competitor store advertised the identical item at a lower price.



The following were predicted to be among the most popular and best-selling festive season toys:

### CHECKERS

- Glo Up dolls for R399.99
- Collectable Plush toys including the Bestmade Plush Bear for R199.99
- Cuddly Baby – Talking Baby Doll for R149.99
- Zuru Sparkle Girlz Princess Doll for R249.99
- Jurassic World dinosaurs including a Stegosaurus for R399.99
- Zuru X-Shot Skins blaster guns from R99.99
- Tonka construction dump truck for R399.99
- Caterpillar Power Hauler for R399.99
- Radio-controlled cars by Radiocom and Rastar, from R399.99.



### SHOPRITE

- Patch Belly Soft Bear for R99.99
- Cuddly Baby dolls for R49.99
- Beauty Fashion Doll for R19.99
- Baby Cutie Doll (soft body) for R199.99
- My Sweet Princess doll for R99.99
- Dino World Roaring Dinosaur for R99.99
- Battery operated Robot with sound and lights for R119.99
- Zeus Dump Truck for R99.99. **SR**