



## AFRICAN ODYSSEY

With the dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy and inflation down 3-4% pa, Brent Oil Africa (BOA) had a viable opportunity to get in on the ground floor in Zimbabwe.

BOA MD Pierre van Niekerk said, "The geographically important Zimbabwean petroleum market with its sound pipeline and well-located storage capacity is critical as a logistical gateway for distributing petroleum products to various SADC countries. Consequently we concluded a strategic partnership agreement with Calco Petroleum, now trading as Brent Oil Zimbabwe, headed by Dean Harrison. This gives us feet and assets on the ground and it's managed by people conversant with the Zimbabwean petroleum industry's intricate dynamics."

According to Van Niekerk, a major obstacle was that independents in the petroleum market were left severely cash-strapped when the local currency was abolished during the US dollarisation process. He continued, "BOA capitalised on the situation because we have the ability to provide consistent, reliable and sustainable product supply. So, we've passed on our skill in taking advantage of reduced volume pricing to independent operators to stimulate the market at grassroots level. Furthermore, many independent retail sites have become white sites, offering the potential to be filled and branded as Brent Oil sites."

The withdrawal of the petroleum majors from Zimbabwe has paved the way for an indigenous African brand to establish itself as one of the leading brands in Southern Africa. Thus, through Brent Oil Zimbabwe, the Brent Oil brand can be established through wholesale supply and retail sites so as to position itself strategically downstream. To take advantage of the downstream operational opportunities BOA is currently preparing to bring product in by shipping tanker ex refinery, through the Port of Beira via pipeline to Harare.

Van Niekerk confirmed that BOA had obtained key contracts with mines in Zambia and the DRC.

## Booming business

Since Southgate service station near Polokwane rebranded from Caltex to Brent Oil in October 2010, it has steadily increased its volume of liters sold every month. Said GM Ansie Davel, "Many detractors told us that we would suffer business-wise because Brent Oil wasn't such a well-known a brand. However, exactly the opposite has happened and business is booming."

On the main route to Cheunespoort and Zion City Moria to which Zion Christian Church members flock, Davel said the service station couldn't have been better positioned. "Our shop also does a roaring trade." She praised her staff, saying that everyone worked together as a team. "The fact that many staff members have been working for us for 13 to 17 years, speaks for itself."



## Making mincemeat of admin

*Elize Steenekamp*

*Brent Oil accounting and admin manager*



*Birthday:* 15 June

*Employment history:* Started at Brent Oil in 2005; previously spent 14 years as a corporate payroll manager for the Agricultural Research Council

*What you like most about your job:* Every day brings new challenges

*Favourite actors:* Vin Diesel

*Life philosophy:* "Even a fool knows you can't reach the stars, but that doesn't stop a wise man from trying"

*Reading:* I'd rather watch the film versions

*Favourite TV programme:* 'Lie to me'

*Favourite food/drink:* Braaivleis, J&B with soda

*Favourite sport (self):* Shopping

*Favourite spectator sport:* Anything my kids are doing - softball currently

*Biggest extravagance:* My two daughters

*Pets:* Miniature Yorkie, Luca

*Dislikes:* Frogs, bugs, snakes & dirty old men

*Married:* Gerhard (20 yrs)

*Children:* Lizé (18), Elicia (14)

*Hobbies:* Embroidery



## MARKETING THE BRENT OIL BRAND

Whether your service station is large or small, surviving in a competitive marketplace depends on the strength of your Brent Oil brand. Brand image is the perception of a brand in the minds of people – their thoughts, feelings and expectations.



Developing the value of a business's name is essential for any successful enterprise. Businesses that prosper are those that market themselves actively through advertising, leaflets, public relations and a website. Marketing builds brand awareness, while your way of doing business builds brand loyalty. And that's what we at Brent Oil would like you to achieve with the Brent Oil brand. Succeeding in this challenge will reflect in your revenues and profitability.

### A positive brand experience

Creating a positive, coherent brand experience requires aligning every point of customer contact in your organisation with your brand – from answering the phone and attending to the customer to ensuring best practices. The more perfect the alignment between all these points, the more perfect the customer's brand experience.

You can't escape your brand. Either you make the customer experience, or it gets made without you. Marketing material, quality control, buying stock, working practices, inventory management, customer service and finally selling should play an essential role in creating the customer experience. By aligning your service station in a way that anticipates and fulfills the customers' emotional expectations at every contact point, meaningful relationships and lasting competitive advantage are created.

Customer experience is shaped by a series of interactions with an organisation: filling up, buying goods in the shop, phone calls and so forth.

Your internal branding is all-important. It's a set of associations you want to create or maintain and should be customer-centric. This brand identity gives your business and its people something to aspire to, plus it opens the door to increasing operational efficiencies as people learn to pull together.

### Listen – understand – respond

The final ingredient that ties brand to customer in a lasting relationship is a dialogue where you listen carefully to your customers, understand what they say and respond by modifying your value proposition to fulfill their desires. Brand identity is an evolving aspiration that becomes more powerful the more you engage your customers.

As a Brent Oil-branded site, the responsibility is yours to deliver an effective customer brand experience. Where you fail to create a strong relationship with customers, a competitor will.



## Hands-on involvement pays off

Offering good service at the right price is the business philosophy of Gavin Lay, owner of Brent Oil's Somerset West depot, Sir Lowry Diesel Depot. Established in April 2010, the depot sells diesel, paraffin, LP gas and lubricants to transport companies, the public and local industries.

Lay, who spent years in the construction industry, said the business had been growing steadily since inception. "I believe in being involved hands-on and that, plus our active marketing, has paid dividends. Explaining the change from construction to the petrochemical industry, he said he wanted to do something that remained stable under any market conditions.

Sir Lowry Diesel Depot is situated at the bottom of Sir Lowry's Pass in the Helderberg Industrial Park.

## NEW LOOK

The new image Brent Oil signage is really sharp-looking and Safari Motors in Bloemfontein was the first to sport the new look.



In future all high-volume fuel sites (300 000 litres-plus per month) will get this signage. If you are a qualifying site and want to apply for the new signage, please contact your regional Brent Oil office. Contact persons are listed on our website.