



Hands-on excellence

The secret to Deon de Jongh's success is "hands-on management and instilling a culture of typical country friendliness" in his staff. Now under third-generation management, Bokveld Motors in the small Prince Alfred Hamlet does a roaring trade – especially over weekends.

Situated on Voortrekker Street with the Koue Bokkeveld on one side and Ceres on the other, the service station has a kiosk, ATM and workshop. Nine staff members serve customers. Originally a Caltex site, De Jongh decided to rebrand to Brent Oil two years ago. He said not only was the site better laid out and more attractive, but fuel deliveries were also extremely prompt.

WORKING WONDERS



In charge of Brent Oil's retail dealer and wholesale fuel orders, operations manager Michelle Mulhearn has her work cut out every day. But none more so than during the recent three-week strike by petroleum workers. Although tricky at times, Mulhearn went the extra mile, managing to keep most customers supplied and in business. She said, "It has indeed been a challenging month with the strikes. However, with the help of Sasol who provided us with additional product, our drivers who worked overtime and Marlon Lutchnanna standing behind them, we managed to keep our retail sites functional."

Way back in 2004 when Mulhearn joined Brent Oil, she recalled doing two million liters a month with one supplier, one truck, one driver, a sprinkling of clients and back-up from financial whizz Elize Steenekamp. She now manages in excess of 20 million liters a month with three suppliers, a mass of clients, six trucks and six drivers. Assisting her are financial department head Steenekamp, with Marinda van der Mescht and Ruth Nyamambi on orders.

Mulhearn maintained that in this highly pressurised position it was essential to keep a sense of humour. "My biggest challenge in the job is keeping everyone happy." When not working (which is seldom), she likes to read, sleep and potter in the garden.

FAST FACTS

Date of birth: 17 March 1971

Children: five - one human Daniella; two

cats Nunu and Slinky; and two dogs Misty and Valentino
Favourite food and drink: A nice thick beef and vegetable stew with lots of red wine, plus cheeseburgers with my colleagues

Favourite actors: Johnny Depp, Meryl Streep

Favourite TV programme: CSI, Desperate Housewives



Manager Jaco van der Vyver and owner Stanley Reizis.

50-year-old gem

Situated on busy Andries Pretorius Street, 2 Fill Up is Brent Oil's first retail service station in Bloemfontein city centre. Originally an Engen outlet, it has been operational for almost 50 years. Owner Stanley Reizis, a businessman and developer, realised the potential of this well-located site and after being approached by Brent Oil about rebranding it, decided this was the way to go.

The site opened with a bang in July 2010 and has been pushing its liters ever since. According to assistant Marisan Hallett, they strive for good, fast and efficient service - with a smile.

Brent Oil manager retail Terry Webster said, "2 Fill Up is one of Brent Oil's best-operated retail service stations with strong management and excellent driveway service. Staff members are always positive and an example to other sites."

Joining our retail family

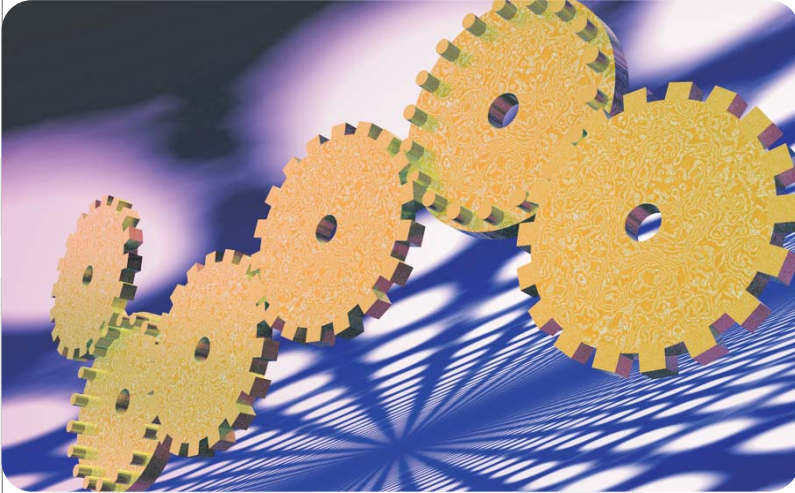
A new, rebranded Brent Oil site is opening soon on the main road in Carolina, Mpumalanga. Previously a Total site, the new service station is part of the Spar Shopping Complex. Both the complex and service station are owned by Izak and Jenny du Plessis, Brent Oil's latest partners in the fuel business.



Hannes Venter of Delf Construction has done the rebranding and installation work. According to Brent Oil manager retail Terry Webster, Venter, who has more than 30 years' experience, is Brent Oil's preferred petro-chemical installation contractor.

BUILD A WINNING TEAM

If you as an entrepreneur want your business to grow and become successful, you need trustworthy and hard-working managers to back you up. The very definition of entrepreneurship essentially means 'doing it yourself'. So, when expansion and growth make it necessary to share responsibilities and authority, some of the most successful entrepreneurs find it difficult to let go.



By delegating a number of your responsibilities to your managers, productivity is bound to improve. The less often an owner deals with everyday operations, the more he can concentrate on strategic planning for the business's future.

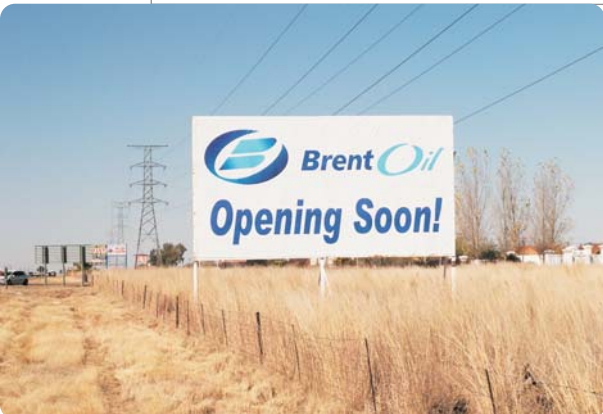
Delegating to the right people is crucial. You need people who can bring a vast and diversified background into all aspects of their work. Also look for people who can implement change quickly and effectively.

Valuable managers will make you more valuable as well. But don't let your savvy selection efforts go to waste. Even highly qualified staff members have much to learn from their business owner. Invest the time to mentor your team and pass on the valuable information and skills you've developed over the years in the industry. Also review basic business and industry cornerstones with your managers continuously. By repeating tried and tested business rules, you condition your staff and provide them with a solid foundation on which to make business decisions.

Remember, a formal training programme is invaluable – it will be money well invested.

After all that money you've spent on your staff you wouldn't want them to walk across to the opposition for a measly few rand more a month. So, be clever. Implement a Golden Handshake Retirement Plan to which you contribute. Only employees who work at your company until retirement should benefit from this. Or, devise an ownership programme for deserving staff members.

Make a conscious commitment to relinquish some of your responsibilities and to build your company into one with a strong management team. You'll never look back.



GROWING APACE

Announcing the imminent construction of a new site on the N8 highway just outside Bloemfontein.

New on the block



With an impressive track record in the petroleum industry, Judith Mathee is Brent Oil's new national sales manager and heads the team on the commercial side of the business. She has diplomas in marketing, sales management and advanced franchise management.

Starting her career in 1988 as secretary to the financial manager at Trek Petroleum, she joined the commercial sales team six years later as sales representative. In 1998 she joined Sasol as wholesale sales advisor and eventually was appointed franchise business advisor in 2004, overseeing 24 Sasol retail convenience centres. Her most recent position was depot manager at Dynamic Fuels and Lubricants.

A mother of a 21-year-old son, Marius, Mathee enjoys camping, biking, action cricket and socialising with family and friends.



Leigh-Ann Potgieter has been appointed assistant to Brent Oil's manager retail division Terry Webster. She'll help with administration, marketing and communication between Brent Oil and its retail dealers and will be liaising with the Department of Energy on matters relating to site and retail licenses. For new site developments and rebranding she'll coordinate contractor tenders, as well as uniform requirements and signage. As from 1 October 2011 she'll be based in Port Elizabeth.

Potgieter has a diploma in public relations and has worked in sports marketing, the hospitality industry and for a brand consultancy. She has three children and enjoys ballet, horse riding, reading and interior design.