



A GREAT PARTNERSHIP

A significant part of Brent Oil's phenomenal growth since inception in 2003 is attributed to the role Sasol has played in the journey, according to Brent Oil CEO Brent Watts. "Sasol has really been a great partner in our steep climb up," he said.

"I have yet to experience a company that goes out of its way as much, is happy to think out of the box, and isn't rigid in its approach. Sasol is by far our most important supplier, not just in terms of volume, but also through the relaxed, professional approach that has added impetus to our business."

Apart from petroleum, Brent Oil is also a national marketer and distributor of Sasol lubricants which are sold on Brent Oil forecourts and to commercial customers through its national sales force.

Said Watts, "Sasol doesn't see us as a competitor, but as an integral part of their business. And that's exactly how we feel. Through further investment, we're converting Brent Oil into a major player in the southern African market. Sasol is aware of our plans and has taken time, effort and energy to investigate our proposals to see where it could add value through joint ventures and other initiatives. With Sasol the book is never closed."

Making its mark

Safari Motors, Brent Oil's second retail service station in Bloemfontein, opened recently. Originally, this was a Caltex outlet which has been operational since 1975. Dr Leon de Man purchased the business in December 1998 and Esmé Brits became a partner in 2001. Both De Man and Brits felt that their decision to convert to Brent Oil was the right one and ultimately would benefit all Bloemfontein motorists.



B-Fuel could be here soon



Terry Webster, Brent Oil manager retail division, is currently negotiating with the AFS Group (Fuelomat) to set up Brent Oil selected retail sites with 'e-fuel'. He explained, "This will allow our dealers the same opportunity as other fuel companies. Because we're not permitted to use the registered e-fuel name, we'll market it as B-Fuel. Thus, our dealers will be able to approach government departments and corporates to secure business."

Few companies have measures in place to control the ever-increasing expense of fuel. Fuelomat stops fraud and gives essential data back to companies. "This will give our

participating B-Fuel dealers a more competitive opportunity to sell more fuel," said Webster. FuelOmat controls pre-authorized fuel transactions. This automated refuelling is used in commercial, onroad and mining environments. By implementing FuelOmat fuel control, the fuel pumps are electronically locked and every litre of fuel dispensed is electronically authorised and recorded.

Over the past few months, Safari Motors has been refurbished completely including new fuel tanks, the latest high-speed fuel dispensers and a top-notch computer system to ensure that forecourt and convenience shop transactions are handled fast and efficiently. There's also a 24-hour convenience shop.

In addition the service station has entered into a franchise agreement with the extremely popular Dorego's fast-food outlet. It will be open 24 hours and serve to attract additional traffic to the forecourt for added fuel sales.

SHARP SERVICE TRAINING

In January Brent Oil rolled out the first of its service station training courses. All forecourt attendants, cashiers and supervisors from Safari Motors and Azrotex Service Station in Bloemfontein participated.

The courses include First Aid, Fire Fighting and Evacuation, Customer Service on the Forecourts, Customer Service for Cashiers, Supervisor training, Merchandiser training, Health and Safety. Said Brent Oil manager retail division Terry Webster, "Brent Oil believes the training is essential. Customers demand and expect the best service from our retail sites."



The people imperative

There are 10 imperatives for service station owners to maximise performance and retention of staff.

For a positive contribution from staff, owners need to manage employee work and performance; and manage employees' relationship with the business. To do this, keep five key essentials in mind:

Provide fair and accurate informal feedback – Informal feedback is the most effective performance management strategy available to a business.

Emphasise employee strengths in performance reviews – Emphasise the positive during formal reviews while grounding discussion of weaknesses on specific improvement suggestions.

Clarify performance expectations – Provide specific, outcome-focused clarification of performance expectations.

Leverage employee 'fit' – Match employees to jobs carefully. Employees who understand and enjoy their work significantly outperform those who don't.

Provide solutions for day-to-day challenges – One of the most important ways to impact performance is through helping employees find tangible, immediate solutions to specific work challenges.

Managing the employee's relationship with the organisation

Amplify the good, filter the bad – Strengthen employee engagement by amplifying organisational traits that positively impact performance and filtering negative effects.

Connect employee with the business and its success – Take time to 'explain the big picture'. Employees who feel connected to the business and see how their effort contributes to its success engage with the company and do their best work.

Instil a performance culture – Promote open communication, flexibility, innovation and risk-taking to create an environment that fosters employee engagement and enables employees to perform at their best.

Connect employees with talented co-workers – Helping employees build a high-quality colleague network is very important. Exposure to talented co-workers develops employees in nearly all aspects relevant for high performance.

Demonstrate a credible commitment to employee development – Engagement grows in a climate of commitment to employee development. This requires implementation of development plans with the necessary resources and support to convince employees of the business's commitment to their development.

Through these imperatives, service station owners can influence both direct, on-the-job employee performance, as well as indirect performance, such as commitment to their job and overall discretionary effort level.



A matter of convenience

Brent Oil is finalising a convenience store option for its dealers, called *My Store*. At less than R200 000 for the franchise, this is an extremely affordable venture, according to Brent Oil manager retail division Terry Webster.

The franchise includes Absa ATM, prepaid electricity, prepaid airtime, Lotto, takeaways, cold drinks, sweets, groceries, copy, scan, point-of-sale computer, fax, free Sun newspaper advertisements and strong management support. "Brent Oil and dealers will be able to standardise the shops, particularly at the smaller sites which need more feet in the door," said Webster.

It has been reported that Safari Motors is close to signing up for the *My Store* convenience franchise. This will be Brent Oil's first planned branded dealer-franchised convenience store.

New service station dealer

Best wishes to Eugene de Wit, the new Brent Oil retail service station dealer appointed at Kenton-on-Sea in the



Eastern Cape. De Wit previously owned a well-known restaurant business in Johannesburg, but wanted to relocate to a more relaxed life on the coast.