

Shahnaaz Moola - a woman entrepreneur taking tyre fitment to new heights

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Two decades and four tyre stores later ... Shahnaaz Moola, who recently opened Khan's Auto-Quip in Welkom - the fifth store and second flagship Dunlop Zone in the family-owned and managed Khan's Fitment Group - understands the hard work it takes to grow a business. Originally from Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, Moola learned the ropes of business while still at school from her father, Mahomed Khan, who ran Khans Fitment Centre in the town.



Her humble introduction to the industry has laid the foundation for ongoing success, which saw her become a finalist in the 2022 Top Empowerment Awards in two categories: Top Empowered Company (Customer Focus) and Top Entrepreneur of the Year.

Lubin Ozoux, CEO of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa, which manufactures and distributes the Dunlop, Falken and Sumitomo brands, said: "We are delighted that Shahnaaz was recognised for her achievements in the Top Empowerment Awards. She has also been a winner in our regional awards. Shahnaaz has been a loyal supporter of the Dunlop brand for 25 years, who fully understands and embraces the opportunities offered by our Dunlop programme. We wish her every success at her new store in Welkom."

Humble beginnings

Moola's father's business, which opened in 1979, was one of the first ten dealerships to join the Dunlop programme when it was launched in 1995. The programme provides a blueprint in terms of product and service for dealers in four distinct franchise categories (Dunlop Zones, Commercial, Express and Containers) designed to meet the specific needs of different target markets, helping them to grow and prosper.

"I was fifteen years old and, as with any typical Indian family, learning the family-business was my first university and my father my first teacher," recalls Moola. "Every day after school I would change into my Dunlop uniform and go to the family store. When my father joined the Dunlop programme he expected us to understand, live, eat, sleep and dream it. I learnt the programme from every product to every requirement!"

In 1999 she married Mohamed Moola, an auto-electrician, who joined her in her father's business the following year. In 2003, deciding it was time to create their own business, they went on a road trip visiting small towns and chose to make Kroonstad their home. Following in her father's footsteps, they found a small storeroom behind a filling station and set up their business. Their start-up stock was a bakkie-load of tyres from her father, who also signed surety enabling them to

open an account and become a Dunlop Accredited Dealer.

“It was tough. We had two little children and our store did not have much stock or machinery. We couldn’t afford to hire staff so my husband was the fitter and I was the sales person and the admin person. We didn’t have a tyre changer and manually removed tyres with a pipe and used a rope on a very old balancer.”

“We worked hard and consistently to make our first store a success. Twenty years later we are still expanding and we also own the buildings we operate from.”



Shahnaaz Moola

Expansion

Khan’s Fitment Group has been a household name in Kroonstad for 20 years operating three franchise brands, before launching another store in Parys three years ago.

The Kroonstad store, Khan’s Drivestyle, is now a Dunlop Zone, operating from much bigger and better premises and providing a wide range of products and services including tyres, shocks, suspension, mag rims, spares, accessories and sound. This one-stop shop with experienced technicians and well trained, experienced staff, has now been handed over to the next generation – the Moola’s sons – Nabeel and Ridhwaan.

Their newly renovated, high-end Dunlop Zone store, Khans Auto-Quip in Welkom, offers tyres, mags, qualified technicians and personal service to serve all customers, whether they are looking for budget,

high-end, passenger, truck, tractor or earthmover tyres and tyre accessories.

Moola will be concentrating on making the second Dunlop Zone in Welkom a great success. “The business, formerly Auto-Quip, has been operating as a tyre fitment centre for over 30 years and is in a prime location at the town’s entrance, where it is the first fitment centre, providing it with a competitive advantage. We are proudly Dunlop and look forward to a prosperous future together,” she said.

After months of renovations, her new Dunlop Zone is buzzing. The store boasts a five-bay operation with state-of-the-art equipment, as well as a welcoming reception and comfortable waiting area. “We have stocked the best mags, a comprehensive range of tyres to meet every need at great prices, and our friendly staff and qualified technicians are giving our customers VIP treatment,” Moola added.

The opening of Khans Auto-Quip on 30 July 2022 included an aerobatic show to draw the crowds, amazing prizes and a buy three, get one free offer on tyres for the first 20 customers – a far cry from the opening of Khan’s first store in 2003.

Encouraged by Moola’s success, Khan’s Fitment Group recently announced the purchase of Tyremart Ficksburg, which it plans to convert into a Dunlop Zone. The sixth store in the group will be managed by Moola’s sister, Miriam Bibi Ashraf.

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