

Ocean Basket: Taking a family brand to the world, authentically

Ocean Basket has maintained its family ethos and authenticity while expanding to become a global brand that has found a home in 17 countries around the world.



Image supplied. Ocean Basket has maintained its family ethos and authenticity while expanding to become a global brand that has found a home in 17 countries around the world. Pictured is Ocean Basket in Brantley, UK

The Lazarides family's hands-on approach, dedication to quality and deep-rooted passion for seafood have played a pivotal role in this ongoing success.

“It’s the Mediterranean spirit of generosity, quality ingredients and simplicity inspired by Mama Liza, mother of the Lazarides brothers, that touches the brand everywhere – we all want to feel welcomed and that is the Ocean Basket heritage – we make you feel at home,” says CEO Grace Harding.

Established in 1995 by brothers Fats and George Lazarides in Pretoria, Ocean Basket began as a modest seafood restaurant, offering meals in a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere.

An international reach with family roots

One of the defining features of Ocean Basket's journey is that it remains a family-operated business that has retained its core values, despite its international reach – it operates in Kazakhstan, the UK, Cyprus, Mauritius, Saudi Arabia and further.

“The brand remains firmly rooted in its founding principles, bringing a taste of SA to the world while staying true to its family-owned heritage,” says Harding.

Customer satisfaction and feedback are at the forefront of the business model, allowing them to consistently improve and innovate. “It is this willingness to engage with our guests and truly hear them that has enabled us to expand globally but has also ensured the enduring success and authenticity of the brand,” she explains.



Ocean Basket CEO, Grace Harding

She attributes the brand’s ongoing international success to several factors.

5 key factors for success

1. Menu innovation and adaptation

By adapting its menu to cater to local tastes and preferences while staying true to its core concept. “

This willingness to innovate and incorporate local flavours and ingredients has allowed the brand to appeal to a broader audience in each new country it enters - whether it's adding regional seafood specialities or offering vegetarian options - and this menu adaptation is a key driver of our global success,” explains Harding .

2. Taking responsibility

Ocean Basket has made a commitment to responsible sourcing of seafood, which aligns with the growing global concern for environmentally conscious dining and is increasingly important in the modern food industry. “This commitment not only resonates with eco-conscious customers but also helps the brand maintain a positive image as a responsible corporate citizen,” says Harding.

3. Consistent branding and marketing

Harding says that the brand has maintained a strong and consistent brand identity and marketing strategy across its global locations. “This consistency in branding helps customers recognise and trust the Ocean Basket name wherever they encounter it, whether in South Africa, the UK or Qatar.”

She adds that this brand recognition and trust have been crucial for the brand's global expansion and continued success.

4. Franchisee support and training

Ocean Basket provides comprehensive support and training for franchisees. “They ensure that the family ethos, quality standards and Mediterranean spirit are upheld in every restaurant, regardless of location,” says Harding.

This support system, she adds, has led to consistent customer experiences and quality across all their international outlets, making customers feel welcomed and at home in every Ocean Basket they visit.

5. Strong local partnerships

She explains that forging strong partnerships with local suppliers and businesses in the countries it operates is very important. “It is these partnerships that not only ensure a consistent supply of high-quality ingredients but also help the brand integrate seamlessly into the local business ecosystem.”

By collaborating with local suppliers and businesses, Ocean Basket has built trust within the community. “This approach has played a significant role in Ocean Basket's ability to establish a genuine presence in each new market it enters,” she adds.

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