



MATSOBANE GEORGE SENOSHA

PROFILE

The journey of life well travelled

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Matsobane George Senosha hails from Bela-Bela from a family of nine siblings. His parents were farm laborers which made life very challenging to fend for all. He went to the Hotel School and studied various hotel causes including Hotel management. He became the first Black African to be the general manager of the Camel Hotel which was later changed to be the Bronnehof Hotel and Cabanas in Warmbaths (Bela-Bela) back in the 80's. The Hotel later changed the name to be the Elephant Springs Hotel. He was accepted in the industry as the general manager by mainly white dominant clientele because of his background and his ability to relate, speak and write Afrikaans languages fluently. He was also part of Tourism Board of Limpopo and the Ten Bright Stars of Warmbaths Tourism called 'Die Sonskyn Dorp Toerisme' where he won several awards at the Indaba Tourism Exhibitions in Kwazulu Natal's annual Tourism Exhibitions. He got to know about Rotary during the time when he was the general manager and was hosting Rotary Club of Warmbaths in those years. The first thing he learned about Rotary was the Four Way Test. His curiosity led him to read more about Rotary to for knowledge. He became the friend of the club as he was hosting them at his hotel and providing meals and drinks. Unfortunately at that time he could not become a member as black people and woman were not yet allowed to become Rotary members, it was a man's club only.

George Senosha left the Hotel industry in 1997 to pursue a career in Retail Business. He joined the Pick n Pay Warmbaths in 1997 as the floor manager and in 1998 he was promoted to the position of store manager because of his passion and always putting his best foot forward. He is a well-experienced business man, Retailer, Hotelier and Social entrepreneur.

In 1998 he became the trend setter when against all odds he challenged Pick n Pay requesting to buy the Pick n Pay Franchise. His application was declined as the time was not yet ready. The Pick n Pay vision was not focused on the lower LSM. In 2002 he tried again and was successful. He became the first black African to own a Pick 'n Pay Franchise. It was at this time when the black clientele increased. Most used public transport to come to the store to patronize and support.

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George decided to meet them halfway to mitigate for travelling expenses. He decided to expand his Pick n Pay Business to reach out to the Township of Soshanguve. The idea was to save his clients from spending for the public transport and travelling to his Waterglen Pretoria store. He also wanted to break the new ground, the paradigm shift. This was also the time when Pick n Pay was not ready to take the Pick 'n Pay to the Township. His request was also declined. It was difficult for them to agree that the Pick 'n Pay Franchise should go to the Township. On the flip side of the coin was that majority of the community did not understand how the Pick n Pay worked, they had a myth that Pick n Pay was the most expensive store which only caters for the elite. This was call for action for George to start the awareness campaign and to educate the community about how Pick n Pay business work. All businesses are regulated by law, no store can just charge any price they wish to charge. In 2003 he tried again and his application was successful. He started working in the area until 2005 educating and creating the awareness around the Pick n Pay. All these happened before the store was build. His approach created vast buy in and support by the community. Some of the projects he initiated created loyalty.

On the 15 September 2005 he opened the very first Pick n Pay Franchise Store in the Township of Soshanguve next to Mabopane train station, Taxi rank and Bus stop for easy accessibility. The Soshanguve store became the PnP flagship store, the blue print and the eye opener which opened many doors for black South Africans, foreign African nationals, for the opportunity to own their own franchise stores. George is a real game changer and the epitome of change. He helped Pick 'n Pay with the transformation and seamless transition to turn the old Score Stores into Pick n Pay Franchise models around the country including some of the African States like Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mbabane, Eswatini and Mozambique. He turned his Soshanguve store into a training Centre to assist and equip those black South Africans who had the desire and the zeal to venture into the Pick 'n Pay retail franchise business. During this time George established vast relationships with various government departments like the Presidency, Social Department, National House of Traditional Leaders, WRSETA, Department of Small business, The DTI and various institution like, TIVET, Gordon Institute for Business Science (Gibs). George use to share his success story with the MBA students of Gibs and he also did presentations to share his success story. Gibs was also sending their MBA students to his store in Soshanguve for the site visits to research and to learn as to how to sustain a modern business in an emerging market space. He was also actively involved with the Gibs outreach programmes like Imagination, Ilima in Alexandra, Hillbrow and Soweto.

His relationship with various governmental institutions provided him with enumerable contacts and invaluable understanding which gave him the insights into working with government and various departments. His work in the private sector has completed the proverbial circle. He is highly strategic and motivated, whose optimism is irresistible and contagious. George has passion for motivating others, developing and seeing them prosper in life. He inspired and assisted to develop more than 120 man and woman in the circles of Pick n Pay who are now the Black Diamonds.

George Senosha's philosophy for business is **"Goods Deeds make for Good Business"** This means, look after the community where you operate your business from by empowering and developing them and in turn they will be loyal to your business and will definitely protect and support your business. This philosophy also includes empowering the employees. This was evident and it paid dividend during the 2016 local municipal elections when Tshwane went into flames and looting in protest of the elected mayor by the ruling party who was rejected by the people. Many stores were looted and damaged but his Pick n Pay did not even lose a chappies, it was protected by the Good Deeds and the loyal customers.

In 2008 he empowered one of his managers Steve Mohope to become a shareholder and his partner in his third Pick 'n Pay store which was situated in Mabopane Township. When Steve left for Mabopane Store to take charge, George promoted one of the lady employee, Madison Mmekwa who was then the receiving manager to become the store manager. He also intervened to assist one of the supervisors Mpho Moganedi who lost his father. His father was in the taxi industry. Mpho's father was in a polygamy marriage with three wives. After his father's death they lost everything leaving the wives and siblings vulnerable. George intervened and bought Mpho a brand new Taxi Kombi to assist the family to continue earning an income and taking the children to school.

George attracted the interest of many media houses. One of his highlights of his career as the first black Pick n Pay Franchise owner was when he was interviewed by the BBC Tv channel. He was asked a question **"Now that you are the first Black South African to own the Pick 'n Pay Franchise and you are going to be rich, please share your excitement with us?"** His answer shocked the presenter, "He said, It's not all about making money and becoming rich, its all about the **People**, he said what will stand out in his journey and will please him is that if one day he dies he want to be remembered to have positively impacted the lives of the needy. The legacy he want to leave behind must be, how many lives did he touch and how many disadvantaged people did he develop so that they can be able to fend for themselves. Indeed today we are talking about the black diamonds in the circles of Pick n Pay retail business, he Inspired, mentored and nurtured many people and also employed thousands of people, he said. He was also training unemployed youth at his store so that they can start their own businesses and fight poverty and hunger. Currently as we speak he did achieve his goals and one day when the Lord invites him to the Heaven he will Rest in Eternal Peace.

His passion for business acumen and socio economic development saw him being acknowledged and receiving multiple accolades including:

- MR Raymond Ackerman Chairman's Award,
- The overall winner Best Social Responsibility National Award
- The City of Tshwane Best Community Builder of the year 2018.

George Senosha is involved in various community organisations and forums.

- He is the founder and the President of Ditsala Children’s Shield and Projects, the organisation inspired by an 8 year old girl Reabetswe Mmekwa.
- He empowered 35 Orphanages around Tshwane and assisted them to sustain their homes.
- He is working very closely with the Soshanguve Taxi Association and Woman in Taxi Industry to bridge the gaps of the Taxi industry being seen as a separate community from the rest of the community.
- George is the chairman for the Tshwane Community Business Forum.
- He assisted with the establishment of Winterveldt Emerging Farmers Union and also was procuring vegetables from them supporting the locals.
- He was the Chairman of The Township Economic Revitalisation Alliance (TERA) where they transformed fourteen thousand Taverns and provided them with point of sale device so that they don’t work from the back of the cigarette box.
- He is a Board Member of the Townships Project founded by the Canadian lady, Martha Deacon.
- He is the Board member of Ladies of Peace, they have been chartered by Government and the United Nations to roll out projects of Peace Keeping in collaboration with traditional leaders, schools and communities.
- Currently rolling out the UN National Action Plan “NAP” and the UN policies for woman and children's safety.
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- He is the board member of Ladies of Peace and the Peace Ambassador.
- He is the Ambassador for e”Pap, rolling out the programme dubbed “One Hundred Million Nutrient Replete Society, fighting malnutrition which is the hidden hunger and cause for child stunting.
- He introduced Ditsala children Shield children to the children’s parliament advocating for the Children’s Rights to participate in policy making and having a voice as children.
- He is the ambassador for Ontlametse Phalatse Primary School. Ontlametse Phalatse who he adopted in 2009, was a young girl who was born with a rare condition called Progeria, a genetic disorder that causes rapid aging.
- She passed on, on the 11th of April 2017 just a day before she was to join the former president Jacob Zuma for his birthday, May Her Soul Rest in Peace.
- He was the champion who mobilized for the change of the Hebron Primary School just after the passing of Ontlametse. He wanted the school to be named after Ontlametse to acknowledge the good deed despite the odds of facing a short life. He engaged Department of Education, North West, negotiations started and eventually the request was granted the Hebron Primary School name was changed to Ontlametse Phalatse Primary School. This was a great achievement.
- He is a board member of Soshanguve Community Radio and fighting for the rights of community Radios from abuse and to restore their dignity.

- He became the first black South African President of the Rotary Club Waterkloof 2019 to 2021 who led the club to be awarded the Rotary Citation Award 2021/2021.
- He is the winner of the Rotary Moments Competition Award 2020
- He has recently received an accolade, Public Image Award from PDG Lee-Ann Shearing.
- He is the District Chairman of Rotary Community Corps, currently championing the formation of the Rotary in the Townships and Rural Villages.
- Rotary has been existing for 116 years Internationally and 100 years in Africa but its impact in our Townships and Rural Villages is none existence especially in South Africa..
- He is currently initiating the formation of the Rotary Community Corps in the Townships and Rural Villages to empower and for sustainability.
- George has also established the Children International Festival where the children participate in Little Models and compete with the world on various categories like Little Miss Nations, Little Model Earth, Little Miss World and many others.
- The children also engage on social responsible activities and Peace initiatives.
- In this current year he is planning to establish 100 Rotary Community Corps as part of celebrating the Rotary Africa Centennial 2020.
- He is currently the Ambassador of Corporate Interface International, (CII) Community Transformation Programmes (CTP) and Community Transformation Accelerator Programmes (CTAP) These Programmes seeks to address the following in empowering the communities in the Townships and Rural Communities.
- To revitalize the Township and Rural Economies.
- To achieve this goal he is working with various stake holders in corporate and communities through the Community Transformation Accelerator Programme (CTAP)

Community Transformation Accelerator Program is an integrated solution to make a sustainable impact in communities by:

1. Empowering 1 000 unemployed graduates to become Business Development Facilitators.
2. He is collaborating with the company called Touchsides who made available the point of sale devices to provide to 35,000 FMCG SMEs with technology and operational business management tool.
3. Develop 105,000 retail business owners and employees of the FMCG SMEs in Seta Accredited retail and management skills training.
4. Growing the customer base of 35,000 FMCG SMEs.

Phase 1 of the program has been completed with:

1. Fourteen thousand (14000) FMCG SMEs been provided with technology and operational business management tools.
2. A Loyalty Club established with a current membership base of 750 000 card holders.

Sustainable collaboration is not possible without benefitting Business South Africa as well. To this

regard, the Community Transformation Accelerator Program aims to:

1. Be the facilitating mechanism to enable collaboration and enable a corporate to deploy CSI, skills levy, and other BEE contributions into one platform and get the full credit for it.
2. Enable the corporate partners to fully exploit the branding and marketing opportunities offered by the initiative.
3. He is also bringing on board various Community Radio Forums, Community Radios, Community Televisions and Community Print Media.

George was chartered as a member of Rotary Club Waterkloof in October 2014 and in 2019 he became the president and served for two years until 2021.

He was also appointed as the chairman of the district Rotary Community Corps in 2021.

George Senosha is well-travelled and open minded. He balances academic qualifications and practical experienced in delivering his duties. George Senosha brings a combination of business and Community Building, Human Resource and Industrial Relation, UNISA, Hotel and Hospitality Management, MBA with Jack Welch University, USA which is still in progress. His 41 years of experience in public and private sector is an added value. He recently received the Doctoral Degree in business Development and Administration conferred by the University of South Africa.

George Senosha is a humble African, a people's person who leads through motivation and inspiration of teams to succeed. He is a social and emotional intelligent leader and uses these to reach set objectives. He is a self-starter, a thinker and a relentless inspirer. George believes in the narrative of finding the Purple Cow.