

Cava Sneakers launched during lockdown by husband and wife team

Cava Sneakers is a fashionable footwear range launched by husband and wife Lebogang and Naledi Mokubela during South Africa's hard lockdown in June 2020.



Lebogang Mokubela and Naledi Mokubela

The duo, who also work as digital marketers, created Cava Sneakers to add an extra revenue stream for themselves during a tough financial period.

“One of our businesses is a digital marketing agency which works predominantly with shopping centres, and during the hard lockdown period, most shopping centres were not operating as per normal and therefore that meant little to no revenue. Cava Sneakers was then born, through the combination of our digital marketing skills and love for unique fashion,” explains Lebogang Mokubela, Cava Sneakers’ chief marketing officer.



The word 'Cava' is township slang meaning "to look or to see". According to the founders, Cava Sneakers is on a mission to

provide footwear "you will not find in any retail outlet – it is about exclusivity that does not cost an arm and a leg".

Naledi Mokubela, chief operations officer, explains, "We have partnered with independent sneaker designers from different countries to bring people exclusive sneakers that will make people stop and cava. Our brand is for those that do not want to look like everyone else – it is a brand for those that seek out opportunities to be and look different."



Promising growth

Since its launch in June 2020, Cava Sneakers has seen attracted over 40,000 followers on social media and sold over 1,000 pairs, some of them to customers as far afield as Belgium and the United States. Four jobs have also been created.

Sneakers are sold on a pre-order basis where customers place their orders on the Cava Sneakers online store or via Whatsapp, and order are delivered to their doors within two to four weeks. "The business has grown really well, despite our two to four week waiting period. This is a testament that South Africans (and people from different parts of the world) believe in what Cava stands for.

"The growth, however, also came with teething issues. We have been struggling with a backlog of orders that have led to a rise in customer complaints in recent months. This is something that we are not proud of; we are certainly working hard at alleviating the backlog and ensuring that, going forward, we do not have such issues," says Lebogang.



Retail store opening

The team is now working on opening its first retail outlet in Johannesburg, planned for around July 2021. The store will allow quicker delivery times – going from weeks to two to three days. Customers will also be able to buy online and collect their orders within an hour at the store.

“We are excited about our first retail outlet which will also offer sneaker cleaning services. This means a total of 10 jobs will be created within our first year in business. We are also working on releasing our own sneaker line towards the end of the year. We are anxious but excited,” concludes Naledi.

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