

Women driving success at Dunlop tyre dealerships

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Women are increasingly taking the wheel and shattering stereotypes in the traditionally male-dominated tyre retail and fitment industry. Dunlop's independent franchise programme has seen an uptick in interest from aspiring women dealers, with Katlego Khambane, Petra Els, Lorette Grobbelaar, Daisy Govender and Shahnaaz Moola among those heading up or managing successful Dunlop franchises.



Katlego Khambane

Katlego Khambane fell in love with the Dunlop Business in a Box concept when a bright yellow container selling tyres caught her eye in the township of Atteridgeville. She stopped to ask the owner about the concept, and the rest was history.

Motivated by her mum and partner, she and her brother soon set up a Dunlop Container business called K&K Tyres on the R71 in Mentz, Polokwane. Khambane was able to add a Dunlop Express operation later. She also expanded her original container space into a mini complex that includes a salon, a café, a printing shop, a car wash, and more. Her dream is to have three more centres, including one in Mpumalanga.

She says, "What I love most about owning my business is the growth that comes from challenges, and the flexibility. I currently employ six young people including three women. Being part of the Dunlop programme has earned me respect and growth for my business, and I want to grow the business even more."

Elsewhere, in Kimberley, **Petra Els** is the owner of three Dunlop Zone tyre dealerships, including Trevor's Wheel & Tyre, which won the Dunlop Zone Platinum Dealer of the Year award at a national and regional level for the year 2022.

As a woman, she places a high value on safety, regularly investing in safety training for her staff, so that they are aware of the risks involved in working with tyres. Els believes that women have a unique approach to business that can be beneficial to everyone.



Lorette Grobbelaar

It's a sentiment shared by **Lorette Grobbelaar**, branch manager at Dunlop Zone Oliver Treads in Mossel Bay. Grobbelaar firmly believes in supporting women-led businesses, recognising the challenges that women often face in achieving equality in the workplace. She believes they bring unique strengths to the table, such as their inherent ability to multitask and be adaptable in stressful work environments.

Grobbelaar has taken full advantage of Dunlop's development initiatives. She says, "From the day I became involved in the tyre industry, it has been a challenge to be recognised and treated as an equal. Over the years, I realised that by educating myself on product knowledge, getting practical experience by joining salespeople on client visits, and involving myself in every aspect of the business, I can create a breakthrough."

For other women dealers, tyre fitment has been more of a family affair.



Daisy Govender

Daisy Govender left her well-established career in the real estate industry for unfamiliar terrain in tyre fitment, after her beloved husband passed away, leaving her to take over his tyre store. Today, she is the owner of the Dunlop Zone Tyre Track and co-owner of Simunye Tyres, both in Ballito.

"It was a new journey for me, and while it was a challenge getting to grips with the industry, I soon found a rhythm and looked towards setting a new challenge," she recalls.

A year and a half into her journey, Govender has now taken another bold step with the launch of Simunye Tyres, a strategic alliance between herself and the local taxi association. After an unexpected foray into the industry, she is forging ahead with determination and foresight, providing innovative tyre services and creating local employment as a successful woman in the industry.



Shahnaaz Moola

For **Shahnaaz Moola**, learning the family's tyre business was her first university and her father her first teacher. Originally from Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, she was still at school when she started working for her father, Mahomed Khan, who ran Khans Fitment Centre in the town. The business, which opened in 1979, was one of the first ten dealerships to join the Dunlop Programme when it was launched in 1995.

Moola has now worked in the tyre industry for more than 25 years and owns multiple tyre fitment centres. She 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. Their Kroonstad store, Khan's Drivestyle, is now a Dunlop Zone, operating from much bigger and better premises. This one-stop shop has now been handed over to the next generation – the Moola's sons – Nabeel and Ridhwaan. Khan's Fitment Group also purchased a sixth store, Tyremart Ficksburg, which it plans to convert into a Dunlop Zone and which will be managed by Moola's sister, Miriam Bibi Ashraf.

Moola believes women play a major role in the industry, with their fine attention to detail, motivation to get things done, and their drive. Her advice to younger women is: "Be independent and honest, work hard, and most of all, know your industry through and through."

From changing tyres to changing the game, these and many other women Dunlop franchise dealers are changing the face of the industry and showing they can compete with the best through their hard work, passion, and dedication.

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