

Shoprite's Uniq clothing chain plans expansion, local sourcing

By Nqobile Dlodla

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South Africa's biggest supermarket retailer Shoprite plans to add 20 more Uniq clothing stores in 2024 and is also looking to source its basics clothing range at home, executives told *Reuters* on Wednesday as they launched the 20th store.



A worker walks at Uniq clothing store, owned by one of South Africa's biggest supermarket retailer Shoprite Holdings during its opening at Sandton mall in Sandton, South Africa, 24 April 2024. Reuters/Siphwe Sibeko/File Photo

Over recent years, Shoprite has been looking for growth in areas such as pet, baby and outdoor products, launching standalone stores including by branching into clothing in 2023 with Uniq, its apparel brand under its Checkers upmarket grocery chain.

But unlike its grocery rivals Pick n Pay and Game and Makro, both owned by Walmart's Massmart, Shoprite is targeting affluent shoppers with its slightly pricier basic ranges such as jumpers for R369 (\$19.20), joggers and t-shirts.

The group wanted to address the gap in the market for quality, everyday and timeless basics instead of flooding the fast fashion space, Benise Spangenberg, head of buying at Uniq, told *Reuters* inside the new store located in upmarket Sandton City Mall in Johannesburg.

"There are a lot of retailers that play in the fashion space and basics almost got lost and that is really the foundation of most people's wardrobes," Spangenberg said. "I think there was a real gap for that."



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The retailer sources its clothing in the Southern African Development Community region but now wants to bring production closer to consumers.

"We have identified and visited a local factory that we can use. It's something that we are definitely looking into (local sourcing)," she said.

Also talking to *Reuters*, Uniq's National Operations Manager Leigh Ogle added that "we saw with Covid what happened when you put all your eggs in the Asian basket and then you can't get your products into your country."

Ogle said the retailer plans to open another 20 stores this year, targeting super regional malls, regional malls and very select premium neighbourhood strip malls.

(\$1 = R19.2145)

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