

# CURVES AFRICA

## AHEAD OF THE CURVE



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*From the day its first Franchise opened in South Africa, Curves Africa has gone from strength to strength. Master Franchisee senior representative, Clive Robinson, discusses the reasons behind this success and what the future holds for the brand*

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Coaching is part of the Curves complete program

It was in 2006,” explains Clive Robinson, “that Curves first came to South Africa with a mission to launch the brand amongst the female population as an alternative to existing gyms and weight loss programmes. In 2007, the first Curves opened in Pietermaritzburg and within three years it had expanded to more than 100 franchises across the country, and ten franchises outside the borders of South Africa.”

The growth in the first three years of what was the first woman’s only exercise provider was nothing short of phenomenal and led to Curves Africa immediately embarking on a strategy to create a vast network of gyms across South Africa, targeting the core middle-aged female market. In doing so successfully, the company went from zero to 35,000 members within its first three years.

“Long before entering South Africa,” Robinson continues, “Curves was already a tried and tested global entity, present in more than 80 markets with over 10,000 outlets throughout the world. What this allowed us to do is take a proven business model and replicate it, with very few adjustments required, in a country where the market had been crying out for an alternative.”

Curves Africa today remains the largest fitness business in South Africa by number of outlets, a fact that Robinson and other franchisees attribute to the several core pillars that Curves has built itself around. The first of these is the original, exercise-focused 30-minute workout programme that the company launched upon entering the country.

While still a favourite amongst the vast majority of Curves Africa’s members, recent





# 2007

The year the first Curves branch opened in South Africa

years have given rise to a mind-set in society that revolves much more around the concept of instant gratification. This in turn has resulted in the appearance of fresh market competition in the form of quick-fix instant weight loss and diet programmes. In response to this, Curves Africa decided to introduce an eating plan to run alongside its 30-minute workout programme.

“Through a programmes called Curves Complete,” Robinson enthuses, “what we have done is combine the core elements of our exercise plan with a meal plan that can be personalised and individually tailored to suit each member’s own objectives, and is delivered through one platform, that being the member’s local Curves branch and the Curves Complete web site. In doing so we have opened up a whole new market for ourselves by attracting not only members who want to be fit and healthy, but also those who want to lose weight.”

Another pillar of Curves Africa’s success is its commitment to providing the motivation that its members require in order to stick to their own programmes. To achieve this Curves Africa has adopted a philosophy that really holds its members accountable through the work of a trained Curves Complete Coach,



who meets with members on a weekly basis to provide the motivation needed for those individuals to stick to their respective programmes. When combined, these three pillars allow for the providing of a complete exercise and weight loss programme, delivered under one roof.

“Curves,” Robinson highlights, “was developed primarily to be a community based business, positioned at the forefront of women’s health issues, driving home the positive benefits of its 30-minute workout and

how its use can combat certain health issues.”

However, as Robinson goes on to state, that is not the only reason for its success. “I think what makes the brand so different is the fact that we recognise that not every woman in the world who goes to a gym is doing so because they wish to look like a supermodel. On the contrary, the vast majority actually most want to be healthy within the body that they are in. That is the very essence of what Curves is all about and why it has been so well received in all of the markets in which

“CURVES AFRICA TODAY REMAINS THE LARGEST FITNESS BUSINESS IN SOUTH AFRICA BY NUMBER OF OUTLETS”



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it has entered.”

Over the last couple of years, under Robinson’s leadership, the primary focus of the company has been to ensure that existing Curves Africa franchisees have remained happy, profitable and able to deliver on their propositions properly. While it has made a concentrated effort not to have a situation where there is a Curves branch on every street corner, this by no means is to say that further expansion is not on the horizon.

“If you take a look at the statistics surrounding obesity, specifically when it comes to women in Africa,” Robinson says, “there is no doubt that in the years to come there will be an even greater focus from all sorts of brands to come up with solutions and programmes designed to address related health concerns. While we fully expect activity to increase in our market sector, we believe that the key to our continued prosperity will be to retain the community-based atmosphere that Curves has become synonymous with. We believe that weight loss and exercise should not be impersonal things, and as such we will continue to promote the fact that we build relationships with all of our members. This allows these individuals to embark on one of our programmes and ultimately come up better educated and informed about how to manage their own health.”

Africa is very much where the focus of



Curves as a brand will be centred over the next decade. “The excellent growth of our business, not only in South Africa but also in countries such as Nigeria, Kenya and Zambia, gives us great belief that there are many growth opportunities for Curves all across the continent,” Robinson concludes. “Rather than rushing in, we will do what we have done in the past and that is lay the right amount of ground work and identify the right people to work with, however I don’t believe it is inconceivable that within the next five years or so we will have helped make Africa the leading market in the field of women’s health.” **BE**

For more information about Curves Africa visit:  
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