

## The Sarit Centre

### THE MARKET

The Sarit Centre is one of the largest shopping malls in East Africa and the first ever enclosed shopping mall, boasting 500 000 sq ft on six levels. The Centre, which opened in 1983 offers a modern and diverse shopping experience, including 250,000 square feet of retail and office space to some 70 retail/service outlets and 50 other tenants.

The Centre targets the A-B market segment which includes residents from the affluent suburbs located in the west and north of Nairobi CBD. Its location in the Westlands suburb of Nairobi straddles an important road network to western Kenya and beyond and is the hub for city's high-income residential estates occupied by professionals and businessmen and women of all races. The A-B market segment accounts for 80 percent, while the lower-end C-D market segment accounting for perhaps 20 percent.

The Centre's income is derived from rentals, but more significant is that it is the income base and workplace of some 1,700 men and women who work in the businesses operating in the Centre. Services such as security, parking, cleaning and restaurant staff are out-sourced.

Once the only enclosed mall of its kind, the Centre today faces stiff competition from several other more modern centres but due to its location, carefully managed tenant mix and provision of a diverse range of products and services, The Sarit Centre still enjoys a large percentage market share in Nairobi.

The brand prides itself on initiating and creating modern retailing practices in Nairobi and its "City within a City" slogan indicates that virtually all retail and service needs can be found under one roof with good security and plenty of parking.

The growing and changing needs of shoppers, an expanding and fast-paced African middle class growth all indicate an excellent future for the brand - so much so, that a Phase Three



development - that will eventually virtually double the Centre's retail and office space and include a residential component is on the drawing board of the Centres architects.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Sarit Centres first major achievement was constructing the first enclosed shopping mall in East Africa
- The brand has been nominated two years in a row as a Superbrand
- Within two years of opening in 1983, the Centre recorded 50, 000 plus visitors on Christmas Eve. Also in the same year, the centre became the first mall to embellish its premises with Christmas lights inside and outside the centre
- The Centre was the first mall offering prize shopping promotions, the first to offer a loyalty programme to shoppers and the first to introduce paid car parking fees and a computerised pedestrian foot-count.

### HISTORY

For most Europeans and Indians the end of the Colonial era and Kenya's approaching Independence in the early Sixties was traumatic and they subsequently sold up and left.

Not so, for two young Indian men, both working in their family businesses in the up-country townships of Murang'a and Karatina. Sobhagayachand Vidhu Shah (known as Bachu or Bachubhai to all his acquaintances) and his friend Maneklal Rughani saw it as an opportunity.

Drawing on their families' resources they moved to Nairobi and started the Text Book Centre, providing text books, stationery and sports goods to the growing number of schools across the country. Their enterprise flourished and they added the printing firm Kartasi Industries to supply the country's need for school exercise books.

In 1973, his Holiness Sat Guru Pujya Hariram Bapa on a visit to Bachubhai Shah, then living in a house on land where The Sarit Centre now stands, advised "never sell, buy the adjacent plots, this land is blessed". Advice the businessmen took, when a few years later on a trip to London Maneklal Rughani visited the new Brent Cross Mall, and returned determined to build a similar shopping complex in Nairobi.

The neighbouring plots were purchased, an architect briefed and construction started. However the project had to be abruptly halted following a coup attempt in 1982 but a much scaled-down complex opened in April, 1983 --- The Sarit Centre was a reality.

The Sarit Centre remains an owner-managed business up to today --- tribute to the enduring 50-year old partnership between the two friends ---directed now by third generation Kenyans





who trace their roots and business success back to their forefathers who came to Kenya in the early 1900's

It took more than 18 months to fill the Centre which opened with just two tenants, Text Book Centre and the Uchumi supermarket. The early days were difficult, with empty units being filled on an interim basis with temporary tenants to provide the Centre with the hustle and bustle and sense of achievement which was a great success in encouraging shoppers.

An American Women's Association bazaar brought about a breakthrough, indicating what such events could do to bring in thousands of visitors. Community events, trade and consumer fairs became the major component of the Centre's marketing strategy and remain an integral aspect of The Sarit Centre trade today.

### THE PRODUCT

The Sarit Centre is a modern inter-active shopping mall that has four levels of retail and service outlets, two tower office blocks, a health facility run by the Africa Air Rescue and private doctor's rooms. It is located in the suburb of Westlands, a dynamic commercial growth centre three kilometres from Nairobi's CBD.

The mall is designed to meet the requirements of residents and businesses who want to avoid the crowded CBD. It brings together a huge range of products and services in a neat, enclosed environment where people feel secure and comfortable.

Virtually all retail and service requirements



are met under one roof. This has been achieved with the ambiance of wide malls, security and a degree of entertainment that meets the needs and expectations of most Nairobi residents.

Loyal shoppers can obtain and build up points on purchases to later trade these against other purchases, parking fees or participation in promotions.

The Centres main focus is to provide excellent world class customer service. To achieve this, consultants from South Africa have trained tenants on aspects of customer service, shop front and lighting improvement as well as display techniques. Customer service remains the Centre's most important challenge.

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Phase Three development, the master-plan for which incorporates various adjoining properties, is envisioned to commence within the next year.

### PROMOTION

Promotion and marketing of The Sarit Centre is an important aspect of the business. Since 1983, events and exhibitions have comprised a major component of the Centre's marketing strategy. As far back as 1984, the Centre set aside an exhibition area for in-mall events. These events generate their own income and support advertising on all above and below-the-line media. Community events, trade and consumer fairs are a major component of the Centre's marketing strategy.

To boost its promotions, the brand has produced several promotional/marketing materials including special slogans that have been very successful. The Centres slogan - "a City within a City" has lived through the years and is widely understood and associated with the centre. Promotional slogans like "Lick, Stick & Win" and "Scratch & Win" are synonymous with The Sarit Centre many years after these innovative promotions were first held with gifts of up to Shs. 20 million given away at Christmas.

Another promotional initiative is the [www.kateskikapu.com](http://www.kateskikapu.com) that allows for on-line selection and payment by Kenyans in the Diaspora to send gifts and assistance to their families and friends such as shopping vouchers, cakes, airtime, and other products. It is widely used by Kenyans in USA, Europe, Australia and elsewhere.

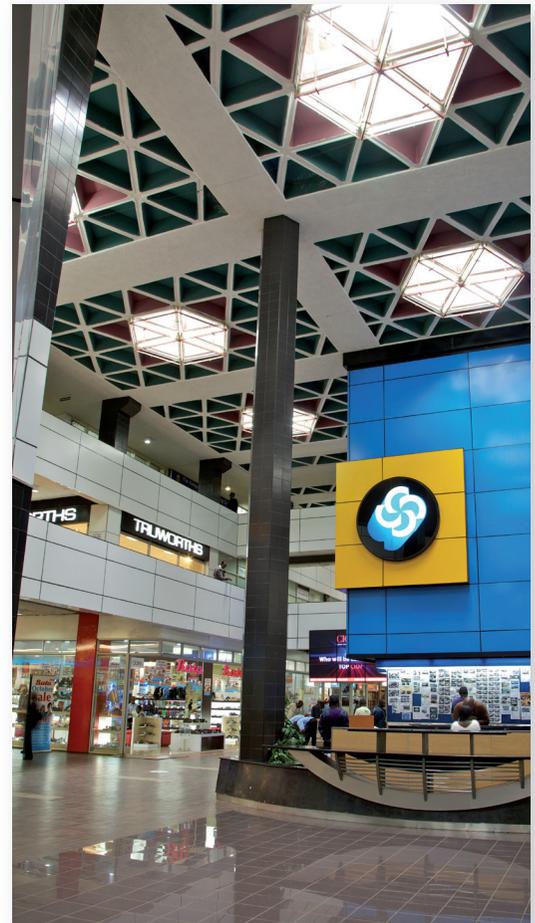
### BRAND VALUES

The Sarit Centre likes to be associated with many values: convenience, everything under one roof and innovative and accessibility of management.

At Sarit Centre, no appointments are required by tenants or members of the public to meet with top management. The brand is committed to service the community.

Over the years Sarit has stood for Good, innovative and pro-active management, quality, reliability, honesty, best customer service possible and fair business practice.

To ensure consistency of its services and products, the Centre has complied with Kenya's National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) requirements and also ensures its tenants have met the Nairobi City Council (NCC) and public health requirements.



### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE SARIT CENTRE

- The Sarit Centre was the first ever and remains one of the largest enclosed shopping malls in East Africa
- The complex boasts built-up space of 500 000 sq ft. on six levels, half of which is leased retail
- Average daily vehicle count in the Centre's own car parks and adjoining roads in excess of 5,500
- Average daily pedestrian traffic is approximately 25,000
- The Centre boasts many "first" in shopping centre management in Kenya and was the first to start a loyalty scheme for its shoppers and annual prize Christmas shopping promotions