

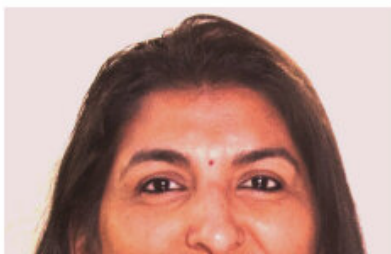


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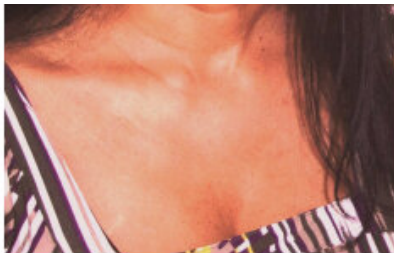
Karunas Reddy, a natural food brand builder creating wheat and gluten free foods

November 22, 2020



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Karunas Reddy, ceo of Nonna's Foods (South Africa)

Startup Story

For all those with a wheat or gluten intolerance in South Africa and looking for healthy, natural products such as plant based pastas and baking mixes, help is at hand from Nonna's Foods. Entrepreneur Karunas Reddy is on a mission to offer her customers the widest range of delicious and healthy gluten and wheat free products that are tasty, healthy and importantly safe to eat.

LoA chatted to Karunas Reddy this month to find out more about this exciting local natural food brand.

What does your company do?

Nonnas Foods creates wheat and gluten free foods using mostly locally sourced and milled products from our exclusively gluten free facility. We strive to use natural, whole plant foods including freshly sourced vegetables, to create our pastas and are proud to boast the widest range of locally produced

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industries, etc. Although the products were created as a niche offering for the gluten intolerant community, we find demand for the product growing as more and more customers seek the product as an alternate safe food source.



“I believe every person has the right to safe, nutritious food and good food is the medicine of life.”

Google Ad campaign offer for women entrepreneurs in the Lionesses of Africa community who want to reach new customers online.

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Amena ElSaie, a disability champion of change in Egypt

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What inspired you to start your company?

I did the corporate stint and after 15 years, armed with all banking qualifications and a MBA Degree, I hung up my corporate jacket and dedicated my life to my family. It was a usual shopping trip for celebratory dinner when I found Nonnas Gluten Free Lasagne at our local Supermarket. I served this as dinner option and we were all so wowed. It was the best kept secret, we thought. I bought the business and vowed to share it with the rest of the world. The decision to buy Nonna's Food was almost a natural transition for me. It was the perfect fit and opportunity as food is my passion. I believe every person has the right to safe, nutritious food and good food is the medicine of life. I always advocated healthy eating, healthy living and inspired those close to me to live this way. My children were raised not knowing what was Coke, KFC, MacDonald's, etc. until they went to school and returned with lots of questions. They are old enough to choose now and will politely decline any offers for most fast foods or 'junk' food.

Why should anyone use your service or product?

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sourced vegetables that are cooked and pureed to create our pastas. We deliver artisanal quality pastas made the authentic way.

Further, our brand is trusted as a safe food option and has led the way as an innovator in the gluten free market in SA. Our customers are our biggest marketers. We continue in our endeavour to meet customer expectations by ensuring responsible manufacturing, by offering biodegradable packaging for our pastas, green manufacturing practices by using sustainable energy sources and most importantly sourcing raw materials from our local communities.



“Although the products were created as a niche offering for the gluten intolerant community, we find demand for the product growing as more and more customers seek the product as an alternate safe food source.”



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Tell us a little about your team

Our full time team is three POC females. We have been together since inception and work efficiently as a team. This has helped to ensure service delivery and costs are well managed. We employ contract workers when in need.

Share a little about your entrepreneurial journey. And do you come from an entrepreneurial background?

I am not from an entrepreneurial family. I have always supported entrepreneurs and businesses in my previous vocation both as credit risk management and accounting and software support. Cash flow management and a finger on the costs is what keeps an entrepreneur sustainable no matter how great the business idea or innovation.

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Lutea Magaia, a Mozambican entrepreneur contributing to environmental education and the green ecosystem



Rachel Kobo, a South African natural hair care brand builder

Food will become a scarce resource in the next few decades. We, as 'foodpreneurs' must create wholesome food options that are easy to access and affordable, especially for Africa. We will continue to seek alternate food offerings and find sustainable solutions that protect our land and its children. Go back to our roots and seek traditional ingredients, real food that protects us from ailments.

Going forward a digitized food supply is the way to go. In kitchens around the world there is this demand for smart safe food supply. I believe Block Food chain will create a network to trace food sources from seed to table and all transactions in between especially with food having no boundaries. This will no doubt increase food safety and freshness, unlock supply chain inefficiencies, minimise food waste (my pet hate) enhance brand reputation and accountability and contribute to bottom line.

We seek a strategic growth partner who shares our vision for creating healthy, sustainable food sources whilst appreciating that food could become a scarce commodity if communities are not empowered and educated to manage this.

We hope this will create access to market and mentorship to upscale our business and grow a proudly authentic, local brand.



Brigette Mashile, a South African fashion entrepreneur creating custom designs for discerning clients



Pendo Galukande, a Ugandan social entrepreneur creating opportunities through premium gifting



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“We, as ‘foodpreneurs’ must create wholesome food options that are easy to access and affordable, especially for Africa.”

Anna Karina de Sousa, a Mozambican entrepreneur passionate about aesthetics and beauty



Michelle Geere, a South African entrepreneur empowering SMEs through online advertising

What gives you the most satisfaction being an entrepreneur?

Being an entrepreneur keeps me challenged. I set my own boundaries and extend them when I feel stifled. Together with my team, I have the opportunity to create my own destiny and build my brand.

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What's the biggest piece of advice you can give to other women looking to start-up?

Always keep the BIG picture in sight. No matter how far-fetched it may appear, do not lose focus and you will get there one step at a time.

Be authentic and true to yourself and your brand. Empower yourself and educate yourself.

Walk, talk and live your brand as YOU are your brand. Build a brand where customers will seek you by name.

Contact or follow Nonnas Foods

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Why LoA loves it....

The market for natural, healthy food products is growing, as consumers become much more aware about the need to balance a healthy diet whilst at the same addressing the rise of food intolerances. Karunas Reddy is creating a trusted brand in the natural and nutritious food sector, and her customers are becoming fans of the wide product range that offers both convenience and a safe food source. This is definitely a brand to watch as it grows its market share this coming year.

— *Melanie Hawken, founder & ceo of Lionesses of Africa*



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