

A 50-cent discount on a whole chicken may not mean much to many people – but when you're buying in quantities of over 30 000 cases of chickens for more than 170 stores, scoring this *small* concession can put a smile on many a store owner's face.

The thrill of the bulk discount gives USB MBA student, adrenalin junkie and Spar Western Cape category buyer Rall Naude (31) a rush similar to the high he gets from his favourite outdoor pursuits – which is just part of the reason why he was recently awarded Spar Western Cape's Think Retail Award.

The award is presented annually to a highly motivated and client-oriented person, in recognition of excellent services provided to the company's wide spread of retailers.

Naude, a category buyer of FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods), including all frozen goods and fresh chickens, has worked for his present company for four years, and buys FMCG products on behalf of 170 stores in the Western Cape and Namibia. He is thrilled with his Think Retail award – especially because it is not awarded by a committee, but voted on by Spar store owners to reward someone at head office for going beyond the call of duty.

"It means a lot to me that the award came from the retailers, who in effect are my customers," Naude says. "I've been working towards this for four years. Winning this award is rewarding because it's about quality of service, and an acknowledgement by the retailers that I'm always thinking about their interests.

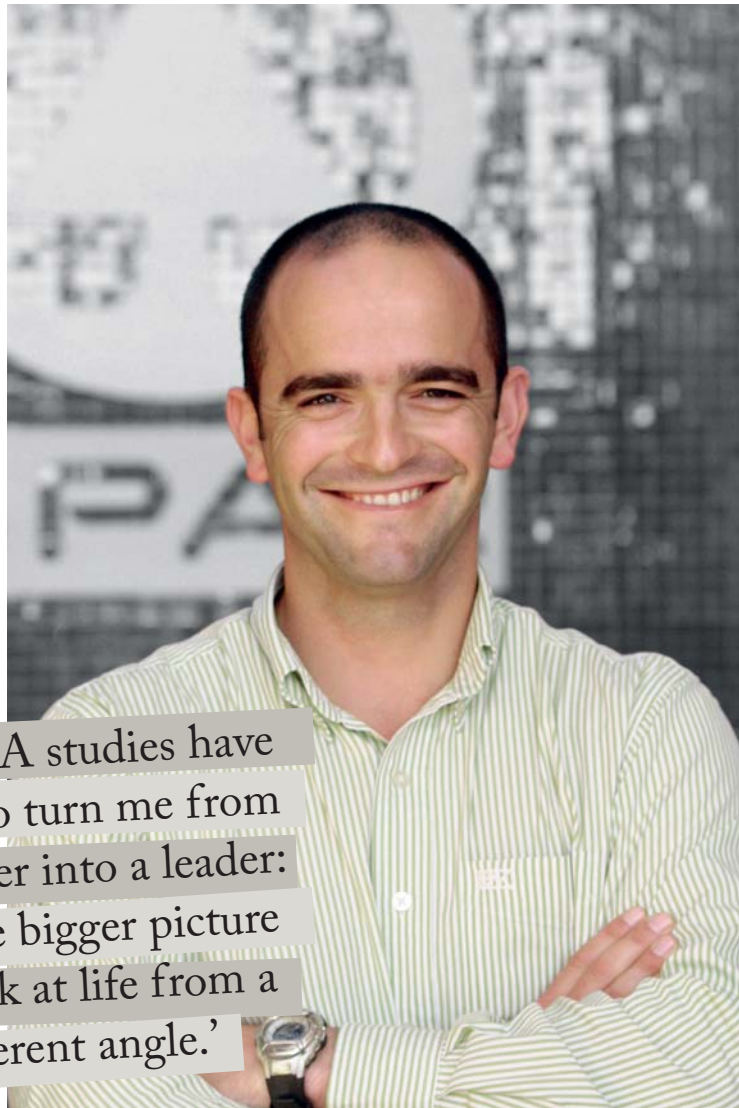
"FMCG is a very competitive market, and I enjoy the rush of beating our competitors by getting a 50c cut from a supplier. When retailers thank me for getting a better deal, that puts a smile on my face.

At the end of the day, we need our retailers to be successful. Their success is my success."

Naude is driven by one golden rule in his work life, gleaned from the lessons of the 'father of modern management', Peter Drucker: "Quality in a service or product is not what you put into it. It is what the client or customer gets out of it." >

# Think Success

He has been fascinated by all things retail for years, and was recently rewarded with a major retail award. MBA student Rall Naude shares his future plans with **SIERAAJ AHMED**.



'My MBA studies have helped to turn me from a manager into a leader: I see the bigger picture and look at life from a different angle.'



**PROOF OF SUCCESS:**  
Rall Naude's coveted trophy.



**GOING PLACES:**  
The MBA is Rall Naude's launch pad.

Naude, who started his MBA in January 2008, grew up in Paarl, and now lives in a Cape Town suburb close to the sea, so that he can indulge his other passion: extreme sports, like surfing, kitesurfing and motocross (off-road motorcycle racing).

He has always been fascinated by retail stores and the processes that go into

**'My relationship with employees has changed – it feels as if my growth has helped them grow too.'**

making them successful, and completed a National Diploma in Retail Business Management via the Cape Technikon (now Cape Peninsula University of Technology) in 2001. After managing various retail stores (including surf, clothing, deli and grocery stores) and spending a year in London to gain overseas experience, he returned to South Africa, completed his Bachelor's degree in Retail Business Management, and landed a job as promotions coordinator for Spar Western Cape. Eight months later he was promoted to promotions manager for the Western Cape and Namibia, and earlier this year he was promoted again – to his current position.

At the prompting of an acquaintance two years ago, Naude started investigating MBA programmes. "I've never considered myself terribly academic, or someone who enjoys sitting behind books – since I'm such an outdoor person – but once I started looking into it, the challenge was irresistible."

Eighteen months into his MBA training, Naude is thrilled at the changes in his personal management style. "I definitely feel that the MBA has helped to turn me from a manager into a leader. Before, I didn't really realise there was a difference, but now I feel more like a leader: I see the bigger picture and look at life from a different angle."

His MBA training has helped him feel more confident – not only in his own abilities, but also in his interpersonal relationships with colleagues. "Often, we tend to say 'Hello, how are you?' without really listening to the response. Since I started my MBA, I've learned to value people as individuals more. My relationship with employees has changed – it feels as if my growth has helped them grow too. As an example, I had always had a particularly difficult relationship with one employee, but in the past year, that relationship has improved and the person has grown to such an extent that it led to a promotion. I felt that was a victory I could share in."

Naude will write his final exams next April, and hopes to finish his thesis and graduate in 2011. After that, the sky's

the limit. "I want to climb the corporate ladder and be a marketing director someday, and hopefully a managing director at some later stage in my life." Then he adds, with a smile, "At some point, after the MBA – using this strong foundation – I will confidently be able to build on my personal life, including marriage and family." **a**

### Rall Naude's tips for success

- Be prepared every day, whatever you're doing.
- Try to smile always.
- Surround yourself with people you like – or learn to like them.
- Believe in yourself.
- Treat people fairly and equally, and respect their values.
- Always be honest in business. Don't have hidden agendas.
- Network. Build relationships with people.
- Set goals for yourself.
- Make time to relax, whatever your favourite relaxation may be.
- Travel. Learn about different people and cultures; it helps you understand people better and broadens your horizons.
- Be open to criticism, so that you know when you're doing something wrong, and can learn and grow from it. And be constructive when criticising others.