



Kaliq Essop...from humble beginnings to reaching great heights.

Tsogo Sun manager's recipe for success

Charanee Marimuthu

From studying full time and working to pay for his tuition to running a renowned hotel, Kaliq Essop has dished out his successes gracefully ultimately achieving one of his goals of managing a hotel. This Tsogo Sun manager knows how to start at the bottom and to tenaciously work his way to the top.

Essop 43, moved to Phoenix at the young age of 15, as a student at Crystal Point Secondary. He worked as hard as he could and passed matric

with outstanding marks. Having always known where he wanted to be in life, he decided to take a family passion and turn it into a career. Essop said, "My entire family came from a line of cooks. I grew up cooking with my family at functions, weddings and prayers. I felt I needed to get exposure on the management side of food and decided to study to fulfill my long term goal of having my own restaurant." Essop soon enrolled himself into the prestigious M L Sultan Hotel School, now known as the Durban University of Technology. It was at this school that he majored in hotel management. Things were not easy though. His dad had lost his job and Essop was a full time student without any funds. He never gave up though, he decided that the best way forward would be to work part time to pay his tuition. He got a weekend job with a driving school and he worked some nights as a waiter. It wasn't long until Essop graduated with a national diploma in hotel management.

All his life Essop firmly believed that life does not throw you challenges, instead it gives you opportunities to improve. His first opportunity arose when he started working for the Tsogo Sun. He worked the night shift for 5 years as a night auditor and later a night manager. It was at this moment that he realized that he would need to make a hard decision in order to get recognized and progress. He said, "I made a big decision in my career to move to Cape Town and leave my family,

friends and my entire network." Within just four short years in Cape Town, Essop had moved up the corporate ladder and gained a position as second in charge. He was not going to stop there though, by 2001 Essop had successfully become the first non-white General manager to run the Elangeni Hotel. By 2002 the Elangeni Hotel had won a "hotel of the year" award after being under his management. Upon asking him about his source of inspiration he said, "Well in the beginning it was my parents, both my mom and dad cooked at events, and I watched them cater for hundreds of guest with calmness and the compliments from their customers. Then it became my general manager in Cape Town, Barry van Coller who I worked very hard to be like in every way possible."

Essop is now the general manager of the Tsogo Sun. He has been working with them for twenty years and he has been in the hotel management and food industry for an astounding twenty years. He currently lives in Balito with his wife Liezel Essop, his two children Rehan and Laila, and their two dogs Fudge and Rainbow. When he is not ensuring that the Tsogo Sun is running at its best he is on the golf course or enjoying time with his family. Essop still loves cooking for his family and he still aspires to reach greatness by working hard. Essop, the former Phoenix resident has proven that nothing is impossible with a lot of work and sacrifice.