

Tendai Sixpence

General Manager • Gutsai Convenience Stores • Harare: Zimbabwe
University of Zimbabwe • Harare: Zimbabwe



When Tendai Sixpence first met Sylvester John, Senior Vice President, SIFE International, in 2002, by his own account he was “quite comfortable conforming to standards.” As they worked together over three years to establish SIFE Zimbabwe, “Sylvester really made a huge impact. As a result, my mindset totally changed. Where initially my thinking was more focused on the processes, Sylvester showed us that it’s not the process that counts, but the difference achieved in people’s lives. I now believe in the limitless potential of the human being, and thus my attitude is now to always try harder.”

Since 2002, more than 500 families have been helped in some way by SIFE in Zimbabwe. And more than 300 students have participated in SIFE on the campuses of four universities across the country.

During his four years participating as a SIFE student at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, Tendai won the Service Leadership award two consecutive years and served as treasurer and president of the team, holding each position for one year. He was a key member of the 2005 team that not only won the SIFE Zimbabwe National Competition, but went on to become the first African team to win the SIFE World Cup.

“The practical work involved in executing projects and preparing for the National Competition is tough,” says Tendai. “It requires mental preparation, discipline, teamwork, and a lot of commitment.” He also cites the importance of delivering results. “To me the SIFE national competitions were an opportunity to present to the community the fruits of our work. As is often the case with a lot of initiatives, we struggled to attain our goals when we started. However, over time, we learned to discipline ourselves and accept no compromises. Pretty soon, we were no longer struggling to attain our goals or implement our projects. This attitude carried over into our school

work, and I’m happy to say that our successes were not limited to SIFE.”

In 2004 the UZ SIFE team beat out three established market research companies to win a contract to evaluate the market performance of all products manufactured by Dairibord Zimbabwe Limited and its subsidiary Lyons Zimbabwe throughout the country. The team’s profit was USD\$3,500 and the project has become a model for sustainable funding for SIFE teams across the region.

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After graduating in 2005 with a Bachelor of Accountancy (Honours), Tendai joined Gutsai Convenience Stores as a Marketing Manager, and was promoted to General Manager in 2007. In that role, he has successfully overseen the development of a comprehensive three-year business plan, and secured two key supermarket sites within the capital city of Harare against competition from the top three retail chains.

“SIFE taught me the importance of competence, of getting the job done. This differs markedly from the ability to understand the work, which to be honest is what I obtained at University. This has really helped me to settle faster than my peers and hence to be noticed earlier for promotion.

“SIFE connected me to a group that I cannot just call friends, but purpose partners. These are people with whom I share a similar direction in life and we are willing to go an extra mile to help one another get there.”

