

Wilphy Foods; a Fruit Processing Company

An interview with William Ngunjiri¹

In February 2014 William Hoyle and Clive Lightfoot met William Ngunjiri to learn about his fruit processing company, and to understand the challenges of running and scaling-up a processing business.



www.wilphyfoods.com

Wilphy Foods Limited

My name is William Ngunjiri and I run a fruit juice processing business, Wilphy Foods Ltd. The production plant is in Juja, 30 km from Nairobi, along the Thika-Nairobi highway. The company started in 2006 by bottling juice into glass bottles, which were recycled; due to loss of bottles in shops we changed our packing to plastic bottles, cups and polythene bags. Our products are branded 'Kawachi', which is our registered trade name. The business has great potential in Kenya as the market for refreshing cold fruit drinks is large. Fruit based drinks are nutritious and are gaining popularity in Kenya.

Machinery and Packaging

We have a pulping machine and another machine to seal the tops of the cups. We have concentrated on producing small packages of 200 ml, which we sell to shops and at higher learning institutions where we find that the small cups are affordable to the young people. Due to capital constraints we are not able to stock high volumes of juice and are therefore unable to supply many other outlets. We would like to

increase our production and to pack in 500 ml pet bottles for shops and hotels.

Cutting Waste and Providing Employment

At Wilphy Foods it is important for us to bring into use the fruit that is usually wasted during the peak season, and by so doing we are providing a nutritious drink to students at an affordable price. We also aim at providing employment by adding value to locally produced fruits. I am providing an income to farmers and brokers; I employ two permanent staff in the plant and additional temporary staff, depending on the amount of work. I transport the juice to the universities and school shops myself.

The Production

We process mangoes, passion fruits and pineapples. The fruit comes from brokers who link to different areas depending on the season. We also buy fruits from the local market and small-scale farmers. Per week I buy around 600 kg of fruit, which when processed and combined with sugar syrup produces approximately 600 litres of 'Kawachi' fruit juice. We peel and pulp the fruit and mix this with hot sugar syrup. This makes a drink, which we cool overnight and pack into cups and polythene bags. We fix a label on the package containing: the brand name 'Kawachi'; the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) mark of quality; barcodes; and the quantity of juice. Waste from the pulping process is collected by farmers for cattle feed; with the exception of the mango stones, which we compost ourselves.

Prices



We target young people as buyers. The juice sold in cups is our most popular product line. We sell these cups at 17/ KES to the shops, who sell them on at 20/

KES. The shops pay me after a maximum of three days.

¹ Edited by Anne Dennig from interviews in 2013 & 2014

Challenges and Under-Production

I have been running this business for six years and it has sustained my family and me, but it has been challenging at times when sales have dropped during the cold season or in holiday periods. Another challenge is supply of fruit; at times there are no mangoes to produce our most popular drink. We have the capacity to produce 600 litres per day but we are currently only producing 600 litres per week due to restrictions on capital and with the banks not ready to loan. Wilphy Foods has overcome processing and fruit sourcing challenges and the business is stable; but I am looking for ways to scale-up. Our biggest challenge is to find capital to build larger stocks and expand our market.

Sharing Skills and Experience

Setting up my juice business has provided me with useful experience that I can pass on to others. The services I can offer include:

- Sourcing and distributing packaging materials, such as jars, bottles, etc.
- Design of logos and labels etc.
- Fabrication of machines for manufacture, through my knowledge of the artisans in Nairobi and using my own skills as an engineer on the design of machines.
- Advice, links and work in Nairobi for members who need KEBS certification and Bar Codes.

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