

Zando's coming of age

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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[Zando](#) launched in 2012 as an online shoe retailer when e-commerce in SA was very much in its infancy. Fast-forward to 2019, the business has transformed into an ever-expanding fashion and homeware marketplace.



Grant Brown, Zando MD.

Part of the enhancements over the years include Zando's own private label Utopia, expansion across categories and the steady growth of logistical capabilities.

The digital platform has served more than 500,000 customers to date, received over 1 billion site views and is the only player in the local fashion market that offers a price match guarantee.

In an increasingly competitive online retail environment, how is the fashion retailer preparing for the next 7 years?

Here, Zando MD Grant Brown reflects on the company's growth and shares plans for the future.

■ ***Looking back on the past 7 years, how do you think South Africa's online retail space has evolved in that time?***

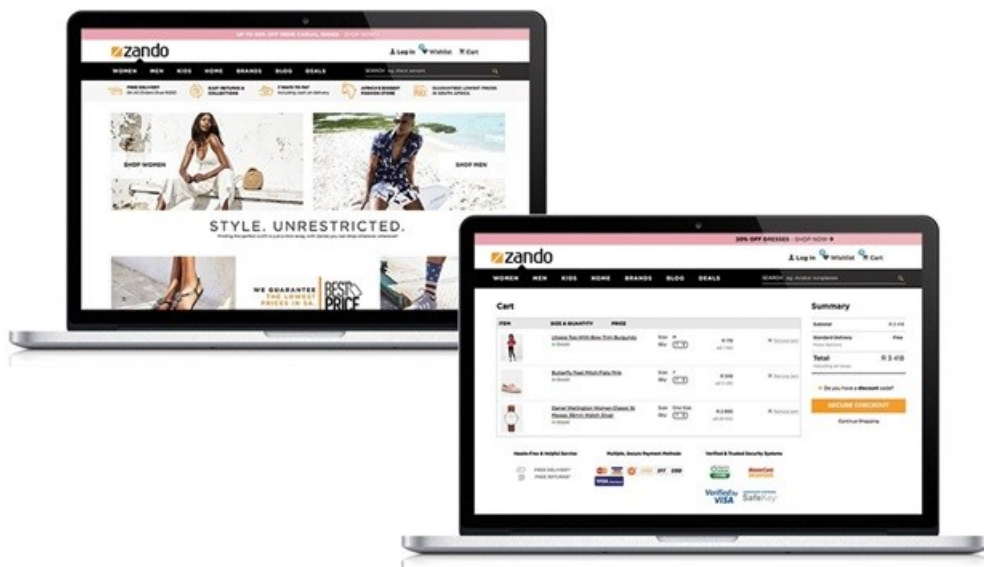
Over the past 7 years we have definitely seen a shift in customer behaviour, as people choose convenience over malls, and they like the idea of a broad online offering at their fingertips. Online retail, in general, has seen some phenomenal growth rates and so has Zando.

Over the past 7 years we have more than doubled our revenue and hence the business each year. This growth requires a lot of 'behind the scenes' work – as the brand and company grows so does the technology to run a company like Zando and hence innovation has been a constant key pillar of our business.

■ ***How has the Zando brand and offering transformed since inception?***

Zando started as an online shoe retailer; over the last 7 years the brand offering has grown to now include women, men, kids, home and over 700 brands across the board. The offering is not just limited to the brands on Zando alone, but also a diverse marketplace and e-commerce platform for a host of other external retailers.

The 'non-visible' part of the customer experience includes heavy investments into your supply chain and operations – today we are operating our own customer service call centre and 3 different logistics centres across South Africa.



Challenges include:

Opportunities lie in the challenges. Once the aforementioned boundaries are broken, the opportunities to increase growth, brand reach and sales is endless. Plus there is a huge untapped market in the township areas.

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What are the company's focus areas this year in terms of customer experience?

In conjunction with customer service comes the objective to convert more shoppers into online shoppers. In 2018 about 25% of our customers were first time customers – and even though we are following an ambitious growth path, we would still like to keep the share of new customers between 22-25%.

Another target is to continue extending our product offering to match the needs of all South Africans – we are aiming to have more than 1,000 brands online by end of 2019.

■ To conclude, what can consumers expect from Zando over the next 7 years?

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