



# UNITED BY TASTE SHAPING TOMORROW TOGETHER

By Ndivhuwo Ravele  
Strategic Procurement Manager

## Bigger, bolder and built for impact. Tsebo's Festival of Fusion and Flavour enters its fourth year.

What began in 2022 as a platform to reconnect after Covid-19 has evolved into one of the most anticipated supplier events in South Africa's catering sector. Now in its fourth year, Tsebo Solutions Group's Festival of Fusion and Flavour 2026 carries a powerful new theme: **United by taste: Shaping Tomorrow Together**. And if the 2025 numbers are anything to go by, the festival is not just growing, it is setting the benchmark.

From reconnection to industry benchmark  
The original vision was simple. Bring operational teams, procurement specialists and suppliers back into the same room, rebuild relationships, reignite collaboration. What started as a reconnection initiative has become something far greater. It is now a national showcase of capability, innovation and supplier partnership.

By 2025, growth accelerated dramatically:

- Total attendees across all regions reached 1,017
- KwaZulu-Natal attendance grew from 225 to 358, an increase of 59%
- Eastern Cape surged from 52 to 146, an increase of 181%
- Western Cape increased from 95 to 140, up 47%
- Gauteng rose from 262 to 373, up 42%

These are not incremental gains. They signal momentum. The Eastern Cape more than doubled its footprint in a single year. Gauteng, already the largest region, expanded significantly. KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape showed strong, sustained demand.

The festival is no longer simply an internal initiative. It is becoming the go-to annual gathering for food and beverage innovation in South Africa.



## We are united by taste

The festival's 2026 theme, "United by Taste: Shaping Tomorrow Together" reflects a deeper evolution. If previous themes celebrated culinary creativity and cultural heritage, this year's focus is collective progress. Taste becomes the metaphor for something larger:

- The meeting point of culture and commerce
- The bridge between supplier innovation and client need
- The shared language of sustainability, responsibility and growth

"United by taste" acknowledges that no organisation innovates in isolation. Every plate served in a Tsebo unit is the result of collaboration. From farmer to manufacturer, distributor to chef. "Shaping tomorrow together" reinforces Tsebo's leadership role in driving procurement excellence, supplier development and ESG accountability across the catering sector. This is partnership with purpose.

## Supplier confidence, client trust

Growth has not only come from attendee numbers. Supplier participation strengthened across every region:

- KZN suppliers increased from 31 to 42, up 35%
- Eastern Cape from 14 to 25, up 79%
- Western Cape from 40 to 52, up 30%
- Gauteng from 66 to 80, up 21%

Suppliers are not just attending. They are investing in larger stands, launching new products and using the festival as a commercial springboard. Even more telling is the growth in client attendance:

- KZN client attendees rose from 22 to 105, up 377%
- Eastern Cape from 1 to 61
- Western Cape from 28 to 39, up 39%
- Gauteng from 28 to 86, up 207%

Clients increasingly recognise the festival as a window into Tsebo's supplier ecosystem, innovation pipeline and sustainability agenda. This is where positioning shifts from event to strategy.

## Innovation on display

Across four regions in 2026, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and Gauteng, the festival once again brings together local suppliers, regional teams and national leadership in a dynamic, high-energy format. The 2025 festival showcased:

- Live cooking demonstrations
- Product innovations
- Sustainable packaging solutions
- Ethical sourcing models
- Beverage concepts and wellness trends
- The national finals of Tsebo's Top Chef competition

The culinary competition, centred on sustainability and zero-waste cooking, added theatre while reinforcing a serious message. Innovation must be responsible. From eco-conscious packaging partners to ethical coffee suppliers and waste-reduction innovators, the festival demonstrates how sustainability is embedded into operational reality. It is not treated as a marketing afterthought.

## A powerful supplier ecosystem

At the heart of the festival is Tsebo's supplier network, one of the most dynamic in the industry. Tsebo's procurement model prioritises:

- ESG aligned sourcing
- SMME development and mentorship
- Ethical supply chains
- Environmental accountability
- Long-term partnership over short-term transactions

The festival makes this ecosystem visible. It shows clients how Tsebo collaborates with suppliers to drive innovation, manage risk and create shared value. It provides suppliers with direct access to decision makers and regional operators. It strengthens alignment across the entire value chain. Internal attendance growth further illustrates this alignment:

- KZN by 25%
- Eastern Cape by 67%
- Western Cape by 51%
- Gauteng by 23%

Tsebo's own teams are investing in the platform. This confirms that the festival is embedded in the Group's strategic direction.

## Leadership through collaboration

The festival's trajectory reflects something broader about Tsebo's market position. With the largest footprint in the catering sector, Tsebo understands that leadership is not declared. It is demonstrated through:

- Strong supplier relationships
- Measurable growth
- Investment in sustainability
- Development of emerging businesses
- Visible innovation at scale

The 2025 statistics confirm that the festival is accelerating. From just 80 suppliers in its earliest Johannesburg launch to a national platform attracting more than 1,000 attendees, the Festival of Fusion and Flavour has become a powerful expression of Tsebo's influence within the industry.

## Shaping tomorrow, together

As we enter 2026, the festival stands at a pivotal moment. The growth is real. The appetite is evident. The partnerships are strengthening.

More importantly, the purpose is clear. In a rapidly evolving catering landscape shaped by sustainability mandates, rising client expectations and operational complexity, the future belongs to organisations that collaborate. Organisations that listen, innovate, and build ecosystems rather than supply chains.

We are united by taste.  
And together, we are  
shaping tomorrow.



**Ndivhuwo Ravele**  
Strategic Procurement Manager



+27 87 820 4146 | [info@tsebo.com](mailto:info@tsebo.com)  
[www.tsebo.com](http://www.tsebo.com)