

BEE Market research company wins one of SA's biggest contracts

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The South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) has awarded a substantial portion of its media industry research contract to a BEE company. This decision has ended a 30-year monopoly of the contract by a single research supplier.

The industry has been motivating for change for a number of years now and it is reputed that it was partly the impressive BEE scorecard which enabled African Response to clinch its half of the contract.

As part of the four-year tender contract, African Response, in conjunction with the Shonigani consortium (Plus 94 Harris and Nielson Media Research) will carry out half of the illustrious All Media and Products Survey (AMPS), Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS), Products and Brands, and Interest Lifestyle research for the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) - certainly some of the most valuable and prestigious research contracts awarded in South Africa.

African Response, one of the first black South African owned and managed BEE market research companies in the country, was established in 2000 in partnership with Proactive Insight, one of the country's leading market research companies, to build a black-owned research company with skills in government, the developing market and FMCG sectors. Proactive Insight is renowned, amongst other surveys, for their customer satisfaction studies in the motor industry. In particular the Competitive Customer Satisfaction Survey, which includes the major automotive manufacturers as participants, the results of which are published annually. In addition, Proactive Insight operates in the IT, Telecommunications, Finance and Banking industries, as well as FMCG and Retail.

The African Response and Proactive Insight alliance ensures that the contract has been awarded to a partnership that has vast experience in the conducting of tracking studies. Proactive Insight has been market research innovators for the last 15 years and is one of the three largest market research companies in Southern Africa. With the most substantial data collection and processing capacity, this partnership enjoys a national network of offices in Johannesburg, the West Rand, Durban, Cape Town, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth. Its sophisticated IT infrastructure forms the backbone of a smooth communication network and, along with ISO 9001:2000 accreditation, enables it to produce research of the highest quality anywhere in the world.

The partnership is further supported by both local and international alliances. This includes a fusion expert Jonathon Jephcott of Synovate (one of the top 10 global research companies) and the multi-faceted media experience of renowned industry experts Jos Kuper and Gill Wentzel of Kuper Research and Brenda Wortley of Brenda Wortley Media.

According to the well-known and respected researcher Beatrice Kubheka, managing director and stakeholder in African Response, this is the perfect opportunity for the company to establish itself as a major force within the South African research community, with a genuine focus on skills transfer. "The SAARF research projects, kicking off in January 2005, are mainly aimed at providing a common currency for the selling of media space and time, and we are delighted to form part of something that has such a vital effect and impact on the industry at large."

The unique combination of research experience, expertise, innovation, data collection and processing abilities, together with an integrated communication network will ensure additional evaluation and interpretation of results and packaging of the findings in an insightful and useful manner. It is envisaged that this newly formed alliance, power-packed with intellectual capital, will revitalise the already valuable SAARF offerings.

"We are able to utilise the infrastructure and brainpower of a 347 strong team, and have access to a world-class system of standards and the infrastructure to do business efficiently all over the country via our alliances," said Kubheka. "We are determined to show our mettle over the next few years and deliver optimum survey data to the industry".

Editorial contact

Wilken Communication Management
Tanje Wandrag
(012) 460-4448

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