# Fabulous forties for Adcheck

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Erling Haslem founded Adcheck in 1971 in Brixton's then-famous Caroline Street under the name to provide a vouching service for all print media bookings and tear sheets for the media departments of ad agencies. Today, Advertising Checking Services is considered one of South Africa's premier advertising monitoring services, as it celebrates its 40th anniversary.



Adcheck 40th birthday

Although media departments and ad agencies nowadays mostly operate as totally separate media agencies, Advertising Checking Services still assists the majority of them, collecting an average of 20 000 ads in more than 400 product categories per month from across 1 500 publications.

After Haslem passed away, Merle Beetge took over the business. Some years later, in 1988, Beetge was looking to sell the company when she met entrepreneur, Trevor Ahier. Realising the potential of the business, Ahier borrowed the money he needed and bought the company.

## Competitive advertising tracking division

Angela Adamson, current company sales director and long-time staff member, explains, "Almost a decade later, Ahier sold the business to Primedia where it formed part of the marketing community portal within the Metropolis division. However, it was early days for online and it was soon realised that the move was premature. Ahier bought back the business and forged forward with a new development called Retail Monitor, which tracked broadsheet promotional activity. I joined the company at that point and helped develop the new division."



Angela Adamson

In 2008, the Retail Monitor division merged with BMi Foodpack - now known as BMi Research - and the traditional ad tracking business changed its name to Advertising Checking Services. The other division, Adcheck Mobile was sold to Mint Technologies. The following year, Adamson returned to the company after a stint away and took over the position of sales director. She was tasked with growing and developing a new unit within the company, the competitive advertising tracking division.

## Launching of Global Ad Source

"It has been a very exciting and challenging move for the business, breaking back into competitive advertising tracking after a few years of us having focused on other areas. The advertising and marketing industries have welcomed a competitor within this space and we achieved 25% growth over the past year. Expectations are that growth will top 40% in 2012," she says.

This past year it also launched Global Ad Source, a global advertising portal that allows South African online users to search for and source international ads. It also expanded its advertising tracking services from print only to include TV, radio and outdoor media.

Adamson says tracking online advertising is next on the agenda. "In the constantly shifting world of advertising, it's critical that we move into tracking new media. The future will definitely see us monitoring online advertising and, although very difficult at this stage, social media. To this end, future developments within the company will be focused on finding the best solutions available to successfully track these mediums."

Despite all these changes, the company's traditional business of vouching still continues today, managed by Suraya Omar, one of the original staff members. Omar celebrates 35 years of service this year, followed by fellow manager, Raygana Nakooda, who celebrates 20 years of service with the company.


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