

Konica Minolta SA provides reading corners for school kids

Following its successful conversion of a light commercial vehicle into a mobile library last year, Konica Minolta South Africa, which was handed over to the Edu-Care Foundation, the company has again entered into new reading initiatives.

Project initiator Laetitia Coetzer, special projects manager at Konica Minolta South Africa, says, "We knew we had to do more, so we engaged in discussions again with Daleen Havenga, founder of the Foundation.

"Together we came up with the idea of reintroducing the age-old concept of reading corners, specifically designed for ground phase learners, as this is where reading abilities are being born. We wanted to establish a special space, away from the normal classroom environment, where the children could sit or lie down on carpets and pillows and listen to a story being told, or simply leaf through the pages of a book, looking at pictures and ultimately give them the ability to read."

"We then created a logo to help entice children to read - using our bizhub colours with a wise inquisitive looking owl - and our bizbook corners were born."

The bizbook corner concept was discussed with teachers and educators at various schools, and the interest was overwhelming. In the end, the Josua Naude Primary School in Roodepoort, Unified Public School in Maraisburg and Horizon View Primary School in Roodepoort were chosen to be the recipients of the first bizbook corners.

Creating reading space

Two of these three schools had areas that could be used for the bizbook corner, so the first step was the major clean up, renovation and painting of the spaces. Horizon View Primary did not have a usable space, so the company erected a Wendy house in the junior phase playground.

"Once the dedicated areas were serviceable, we were then able to make a start on the fun phase of the corners' development. Putting books on the shelves; posters on the walls; unpacking the additional CDs, DVDs, paint and puzzles; and furnishing the corners with tables, chairs, carpets and pillows - basically everything needed to help stimulate the mind of a growing child," continues Coetzer.

Upon completion, each bizbook corner was officially handed over to the schools' administrators to manage, whilst staff was on hand to read stories to the children.

"The bizbook corners are a natural progression from the use of the mobile library. Currently the mobile library services

grade four to grade seven, but the grade R to grade three learners are still learning how to read, and need special attention and books, hence the evolution of bizbook corners," explains Havenga. "We are delighted that this company is dedicated to finding solutions to South Africa's literacy problem."

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