

Magna Carta PR named African Consultancy of the Year

Magna Carta has been named African PR Agency of the Year by the international Holmes Report which annually rates the accomplishments of more than 300 agencies across the globe and also manages the SABRE Awards.

Vincent Magwenya, CEO-designate at Magna Carta, welcomed the accolade saying that the award recognised the role that Magna Carta, part of the TBWA\Group, is playing on the African continent.

It was also pleasing to note that the Holmes report also recognised the work of Ketchum, of which Magna Carta is the exclusive African affiliate, in the competitive Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region where it was named EMEA Agency of the Year, Magwenya said.

PR model for Africa

"Magna Carta has been working steadily for more than seven years on a model for Africa. The model is premised on a partnership with our clients and is supported by Magna Carta and its agencies on the ground in major African countries. We now have a network covering 14 of the continent's major markets. With our local offices in Johannesburg and Cape Town, we now literally have a network that stretches from 'the Cap to Cairo'.

"The extensive Magna Carta network has enabled us to meet the ongoing requirements of major South African and international corporations working on the continent. We count as major achievements the support we provide for Standard Bank across Africa, the launch of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, our work with the African Progress Panel and, more recently, our acquisition of the Samsung Africa business across six markets in Southern Africa," Magwenya said.

PR is growing in Africa

"From an African viewpoint it is gratifying to see that the business of public relations is growing in Africa and enjoying the attention of the international PR community. The recognition of public relations as a business tool has undoubtedly been influenced by the growing realisation that Africa's time has come and is ready to take its place on the international stage. This, more than any other factor, will help the PR industry become a mature industry on the continent," Magwenya said.

It was natural, he said, that many international corporations wishing to gain a foothold in Africa would continue to approach the continent through Johannesburg, which is still regarded as the continent's business hub.

"The challenge for PR businesses here will be their ability to support clients effectively on a pan-African basis. To be successful within PR in Africa will require the ability to act in areas that range from issue and crisis management, through to stakeholder and community mobilisation.

"Being able to combine this expertise with the analytical tools needed to help clients interact with their key audiences is a given, as is an agency's understanding of social media and an ability to deliver relevant campaigns in diverse markets.

"Magna Carta has come a long way since it was established in 1994. The crowning of our achievements with the Holmes Report award is a welcome sign that our company and others within the South African PR industry can proudly take our places in the global PR market," said Magwenya.

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