

media releases

Companies with the Best Media Reputations in SA Revealed

Johannesburg, South Africa - 18 November 2004: SABMiller has emerged as the listed company with the best media reputation in South Africa in the first annual Media Image Survey, the first comprehensive study of media coverage attracted by JSE-listed companies. The results of the survey, a joint initiative from Idea Engineers, Axius Publishing (publishers of Convergence magazine) and Media Tenor were announced on 18 November 2004.

SABMiller narrowly beat second-placed ABSA to secure its position as the JSE-listed company with the best media reputation in the country. Anglo American, in third place, trailed only slightly behind ABSA's score. "SABMiller's position as the JSE-listed company with the best media image reflects just how good the company is at leveraging and coordinating its global communications resources," says Wadim Schreiner, managing director of Media Tenor. "The group has not only proactively managed media relations in South Africa, but also benefited from international coverage in the US, Asia, and Europe cascading down into its home market," he adds.

"The performance of true BEE companies in the Media Image Survey was somewhat disappointing. I believe that this is a reflection of the media's inclination to cover the established giants of commerce and industry over emerging companies, rather than an indication that BEE companies are doing a particularly bad job of managing their media image," says Schreiner. "The amount of coverage that mining and resources companies generated during the year points towards the continued importance of this sector in South Africa's economy," he continued.

"The movement of the Rand against the dollar has remained high on the media's agenda. Currency movements impact heavily on mining companies, so journalists often turn to them for comments about the impact of the exchange rate on the South African economy," he adds.

"Perhaps the most encouraging trend to emerge from the Media Image Survey is that South African companies appear to be committed to transparent disclosure and reporting across a range of business issues," says Mandy de Waal, founding partner at Idea Engineers. "In the wake of global international scandals such as Enron, Arthur Andersen, World-Com, Martha Stewart/ImClone and local ones such as MGX and CS Holdings, it has become more vital than ever for companies to communicate transparently with their shareholders and customers."

Says De Waal: "In South Africa, issues like black economic empowerment, corporate social responsibility and human resources management have emerged as critical components of a company's reputation. Transparent, constant communication with the media can yield excellent results in terms of image and reputation. ABSA's strong media image in 2003, for example, shows that a company can weather difficult times and emerge with its reputation intact, provided it communicates continuously and openly."

ABSA achieved a high score for media image in 2003, despite a difficult period when the group came under fire for an Internet banking security scandal. In 2002, ABSA also received a great deal of negative coverage for the impact that its investment in Unifer had on its bottom line.

"The results of the survey provide an interesting window into the issues that



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are driving the business and mainstream media agenda," says Sheenagh Levy, CEO of Axius Publishing.

"Globalisation is a hot button for South African media. As one of the country's most globalised companies, SABMiller has attracted a great deal of media interest. Interest in the group's strategy to turnaround American brewer Miller remains high and that has helped to generate reams of media coverage. Mining companies enjoyed the highest levels of coverage about innovation, which nonetheless seemed to be fairly low on both the media and corporate communications agendas," notes Levy.

Says Levy: "The survey gives CEOs and marketing leaders at JSE listed companies an objective benchmark against which they can measure their communications processes and perceptual performance compared with their competitors. The fascinating question, one to which only the companies themselves have the answer, is whether JSE listed firms are getting a commensurate return on the money they invest into media relations and corporate communications."

The results for the all categories in the Media Image Survey for 2003 in the various categories were as follows:

JSE LISTED COMPANY

The full top ten in this category reads as follows:

1. SABMiller
2. ABSA
3. Anglo American
4. Sasol
5. Old Mutual
6. Standard Bank
7. AngloGold
8. Harmony
9. Nedcor
10. Gold Fields

CSI COMMUNICATION

The winner in this category was Iscor, with Shopright in second place and DRD in third place.

BEE COMMUNICATION

The company with the highest share of BEE communication was Bidvest, with Mvelaphanda in second place and Lonmin in third place.

INNOVATION COMMUNICATION

The company with the highest share of coverage on innovation is Avgold, with Gold Fields in second place and Amplats in third place.

HR COMMUNICATION

The winner in this category is Shoprite Holdings, with DRD in second place and Iscor in third place.

CEO COMMUNICATION

The winner in this category is Sanlam CEO J van Zyl, with second place shared by Harmony's Bernard Swanepoel and Nail's Saki Makozoma.

INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION

Of all the industries, mining companies scored highest points in terms of combined, distantly followed by the retail industry and banking.

The study was based on an internationally acclaimed methodology that Media Tenor uses around the world for the analysis of media coverage,

which methodology was developed in cooperation with academics from some of the world's leading universities.

The leading 21 business and mainstream media in both print and broadcast were surveyed over a 12-month period from January 1 2002 until December 31 2003, to establish which companies managed to achieve volume, quality and diversity in their press coverage.

The aim of this survey was to identify the companies that managed to receive continuous coverage by the media in the form of independent editorial content (i.e. advertorials were excluded). During the course of the study analysts examined and analysed 16 804 pieces of media coverage containing 393 041 statements on JSE companies and/or CEOs.

The media set included Business Day, Beeld, Citizen, The Star (incorporating the Business Report), Sowetan, Pretoria News (excluding Business Report) and ThisDay; The Sunday Times, Sunday Independent, City Press, Rapport; Financial Mail, Finance Week; SABC news in Afrikaans, English, Zulu/Xhosa, Sotho, ETV news and Business Tonight on SABC.