On Thursday the 22nd April, 2004 the MISA launched the Chartered Marketer networking forum. Hosted by Gerhard Louw of T-Systems, Carolyn Manyape, Colin Hudson, John Arnesen, John Sevenoaks, Natie Bovill, Riana Van Coller and Walter Donaldson were also present.

Two crucial questions were raised:
1. What value can South African subsidiaries of multinational groups add to their parent companies?
2. How can we market the value to the parent companies?

There was much discussion and critical issues raised. Among other themes attendees discussed the positive character of...
the South African environment, such as the fact that South Africa is a country of both great size and stature; it boasts a diverse culture; its market infrastructure has metamorphosed; its upgraded motor industry is well recognised internationally; South Africans are multi-skilled; people are hungry for knowledge; it is a centre for excellence; and it is the main hub in Africa.

After the forum Chartered Marketers who were not able to make it were offered the chance to comment on the questions. Below are a few comments:

“The South African subsidiaries of parent companies can offer tremendous value in terms of product and marketing launches given that the country presents a diverse population in terms of race and culture. Its distribution challenges are as diverse and the ranges and stretch in the income levels provide many opportunities to test price…”

Barry Lamont  (CM)SA
Nedbank Marketing: strategic projects

“My experience is in the pharmaceutical industry where regulations make every market different. However people and their motivations remain the same and that is the common area we should work on. For example the development of logical marketing systems that can be tested here. The downside is that the multi-nationals will not take SA seriously unless the methods we espouse work incredibly well in our own country.

“I think the answer is to concentrate on one specialist area in the chosen industry where we can deliver better than anyone else. In my own company we have developed abilities to do clinical development trials in disease areas where the European countries battle to find patients who have not had previous treatment. In this way we are noticed by the parent company and also earn foreign exchange as they pay us for work delivered.”

Vivian Frittelli  (CM)SA
Director: marketing and sales
Pharmaceutical division
Roche Products

“Africa has become a much more stable environment with regard to terrorism, making us more attractive than many previously stable economies…If/when our rand weakens, our export profitability scope is brilliant.”

Ian Rheeder  (CM)SA
Marketing manager
YKK Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd

- Carolyn Manyape