

Global marketing officer council launches chapter in Africa

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Cape Town, South Africa - The Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council, an influential global peer-network of senior marketing executives, has announced the launch of an Africa chapter to be based in Cape Town, South Africa and led by Bizcommunity.com, which has more than 260 000 content subscribers in the region in the marketing industry.

The new African chapter launches as world attention begins to focus on South Africa as the host country for the FIFA World Cup 2010, and the country's growing role as catalyst for economic growth on the continent. The CMO Council now has regional groups operating in North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, and the Middle East.

The CMO Council, www.cmocouncil.org, is dedicated to high-level knowledge exchange, thought leadership and personal relationship building among senior marketing and brand decision-makers across a wide-range of industry sectors. Its 3000 members control more than \$70 billion in aggregated annual marketing expenditures, and represent companies like Apple, British Telecom, Cisco, Coca-Cola, Xerox, Continental Airlines, Dell, GE, Google, HP, IBM, JPMorgan Chase, Samsung, LG Electronics, MasterCard, Microsoft, MySpace, Nintendo, Nokia, Oracle, Philips, SAP, Sony, Starbucks, Time Warner, Toyota, Wal-Mart, The Walt Disney Company, Visa International, Yahoo! and many more.

Also included in the CMO Council membership are influencers within the African business community including Dimension Data, Microsoft South Africa, South African Airways, Standard Bank and Huawei South Africa.

"The CMO Council has worked to understand and uncover those concepts, practices, and regions where marketers will need to focus in order to continue to grow and broaden their business and strategic practice. Africa is emerging as a growing hub for business as many European, Asian and North American companies look to establish footholds in the region," said Donovan Neale-May, executive director of the CMO Council and a South African. "While my personal bias will always look to bring attention to the African region, as a marketer, I also view South Africa as a vibrant and burgeoning frontier for business and one that will have the attention of the world in 2010 as the host for the Soccer World Cup."

Bizcommunity.com leadership

Robin Parker, Bizcommunity.com managing director, Africa's leading online community for the media, marketing and advertising industry, will serve as the regional director of the new Africa CMO chapter. His experience spans across Africa, from journalism to sales and marketing in various forms of media, including print and online. Among his number of posts, Parker has served as general manager and a founding director of iafrica.com; group head of marketing and media for the African Lakes Corporation; and CEO of MiContent mobile media, promotions and marketing.

"The chief marketing executive is a rare and misunderstood position in most organisations throughout Africa. Through the CMO Council we are now able to harness the collective capability of this group to the benefit of the industry at large, in addition to highlighting the impact a Chief Marketer can make to organisations. Our vision for the local council is to continue to grow the marketing industry of Africa, to enable international exchange of ideas and opportunities, and to highlight the value and effectiveness of marketing functions."

The CMO Council will be launched with the assistance of Kerry-Leigh Anderson of Zenkai Communications on the ground in Cape Town, South Africa.

Invitation-only

The CMO Council is an invitation-only affinity group working to further the stature, credibility, influence, and understanding of the strategic marketing function among business executives, opinion leaders and critical stakeholders. CMO Council members are drawn from the upper echelons of corporate management to form a trusted, close-knit community of peers who use their access, connections and expertise for mutual benefit, support, referral and professional advancement.

“Often marketing is considered by many as a woolly art form and not a science. CMO Council's strong quantitative research programme into issues such as marketing results measurement, the role of the CMO, and budgeting best practice, provides critical data to marketing executives to help them communicate the value of marketing within their organisations. The CMO Council provides a fantastic forum for marketing executives to network, share best practice, and learn from others' experiences,” comments Connie de Lange, group executive - marketing at Dimension Data and longstanding CMO Council member.

“Across all industries, market competitiveness in South Africa is only increasing. This trend will mean marketing executives are going to be under pressure to provide even more innovative marketing strategies that can deliver measurable results to the business. CMO Council can be an idea catalyst for these executives and stimulate breakthrough ideas,” concludes de Lange.

Programmes

The CMO Council creates programs and services designed to add to the intellectual capital of the leading marketing thinkers that are members of the Council. Some of these programs and services include:

- Thought leadership surveys and studies.
- Advocacy initiatives around strategic agendas.
- Intimate peer networking programs and events.
- Regular convocations and gatherings.
- Discussion groups and invention sessions.
- Web conferences, online dialogues and webcasts.
- Article sourcing and media commentary.
- Knowledge bank and content archive.
- Monthly eNewsletter and special eBulletins.
- Career opportunity referral.

Among the specific initial initiatives and activities CMO Council Africa plans to undertake in 2008 are:

1. Formation of CMO Council Africa Advisory Board: As with regional chapters in North America, UK & Europe, MENA and Asia Pacific, CMO Council Africa will nominate and convene an Advisory Board, comprised of CMO Council executive director Donovan Neale-May, regional director Robin Parker, and senior marketers from global and regional brands across representative industries. The Advisory Board will meet at least twice annually to help set the tone and direction of the regional chapter and provide insight into initiatives, programs, forums and other activities being planned or executed on behalf of the membership at-large.

2. Development of Dinner Dialogue Schedule: To facilitate knowledge and best practices sharing and meaningful interaction among the business-to-business (B2B) and business-to consumer (B2C) marketing communities, CMO Council will schedule a series of dinner dialogue and other networking forums, designed to encourage meaningful dialogue around issues of compelling importance to marketers.

3. Introduction of Authority Leadership Initiatives: The hallmark of the CMO Council is its highly regarded authority leadership platform initiatives. CMO Council Africa will seek to launch several initiatives in 2008 and 2009, including launching a global assessment about marketing intentions in the region. This initial program will look to gauge the intentions of global marketers as the world looks to South Africa as an emerging market and gateway to African industry.

Membership in the CMO Council is open to top-ranking corporate marketing decision makers only, not consultants or agencies. Members should have extensive marketing experience and have held executive management positions at new venture, emerging growth or established enterprise organisations. Nominees must have demonstrated marketing prowess, a proven track record of accomplishment, and leadership in evangelising marketing and branding practices. Senior marketers can learn more about the CMO Council and CMO Council membership here: <http://www.cmocouncil.org>.

“The true benefit of the CMO will become apparent as skills are honed, implementation and measurement techniques improve and marketers stand out as true business generators - this will be the benefit of rubbing shoulders with the best,” concludes Parker.

- *About the CMO Council:*

Visit the CMO Council web site to find out about the initiatives geared to address executive marketers' challenges at www.cmocouncil.org.

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