

ALLIANCE GIVES RISE TO FULL-SERVICE AFRICAN COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM

Kenyan PR consultancy The Energy Source has formed a strategic alliance with South African specialist crisis management company Crisis Communications Consultancy (www.crisiscomms.com) and its sister agency Strategy One Communications (www.strategyone.co.za), a boutique PR consultancy that focuses on the local business-to-business sector.

The Energy Source will provide South African companies wishing to expand into east Africa with a strategic springboard into what has become an increasingly dynamic market.

"The three consultancies have been co-operating on a number of projects over the past 20 months and formalising this relationship was the logical next step," says Mary O'Reilly, joint partner with Catherine Coulson at The Energy Source, which specialises in strategic consulting, brand activation and events.

Many South African companies are in the process of rolling out pan African business strategies that incorporate both Francophone and Anglophone countries across the continent, according to Evan Bloom, MD of Crisis Communications Consultancy and Strategy One Communications. "These companies typically use Kenya and Nigeria as their launch pads into east and west Africa. An intimate knowledge of these markets and their media sectors is therefore essential."

Bloom has in-depth experience of the Kenyan market. He was headhunted from South Africa in 2003 to open up Scanad PR, located in Nairobi for one of east Africa's largest advertising companies Scanad, which is now quoted on the Nairobi stock exchange. O'Reilly on the other hand has worked in South Africa and knows the market well. Coulson has also worked at a leading Kenyan PR agency and also brings complementary skills to the alliance. Bloom and O'Reilly have collaborated on a number of projects and have identified synergies between their companies which they believe will be of great benefit to their clients, as will the ability to ensure consistent delivery, regardless of location.

"The Kenyan media works differently from our own," says Bloom. "It is far more relationship- and event-based, so you cannot simply write a press release here and e-mail it to Nairobi – that just does not work. Media success is underpinned by one-on-one interactions with journalists and reporters. That's where The Energy Source's expertise will come in."

"You need also to have an understanding of the market and to know, for example, that it's a price sensitive one," adds O'Reilly. "Kenyans are loyal to their own brands and they have a well established media. These are vital considerations for any company that is seeking to establish a presence up here."

In terms of the alliance, Bloom's consultancies will take on the task of strategy consultation locally, while The Energy Source will manage the rollout in east Africa. Businesses from these regions seeking to invest in South Africa will have the same services available to them: The Energy Source will provide the strategic planning, while Strategy One Communications and The Crisis Communications Consultancy will be responsible for the local rollout.

"Our consultancies are small and focused, which means the senior management team is involved with all accounts on a daily basis," concludes Bloom.

The alliance will target the business-to-business and business-to-consumer sectors and is set to open doors for companies seeking to communicate their message across the continent.

Further media information:

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