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Itec, Konica Minolta spat heads for ASA

BY BANDILE SIKWANE, ITWEB JOURNALIST

[ Johannesburg, 8 December 2006 ] - Itec CEO Jacques Duyver plans to lodge a complaint with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) regarding recent claims made by Konica Minolta which he maintains are "patently misleading".

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"If Konica Minolta SA continues to make inaccurate claims in its marketing, we have no choice but to bring this to the ASA. We already have the necessary documentation to lodge a complaint," says Duyver.

The spat between the technology dealers began when Bidvest-owned Konica Minolta SA claimed to have exclusive rights to Konica Minolta products.

In a recent ITWeb report, Alan Griffith, MD of Konica Minolta SA, said: "We are contracted by Konica Minolta Japan at its insistence to exclusively sell Konica Minolta products and the bizhub, as well as to grow these brands in SA. Thus we are the sole custodian of the brand, as well as the principal distributor."

But Duyver disputes the claims, saying it is "clever word play" simply meaning Konica Minolta SA only sells Konica Minolta products, whereas Itec sells Konica Minolta products, but is not limited to "exclusively" selling these products.

However, the impression given by these claims, Duyver says, is that Konica Minolta SA is the only company contracted to sell Konica Minolta products in SA. "This is just not true," he says.

He adds: "All Konica Minolta distributors are obliged in their contracts to grow the Konica Minolta brand. At no point do we consult Konica Minolta SA for 'brand guidance'. Our companies operate independently but sell the same product; it's just that Konica Minolta SA trades by that name. They do not own that name, whereas we own our name. It does not make them the 'custodian' of the brand."

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