

Itec Supplies Solutions to SADC

Itec SA, previously known as Konica Business Systems SA, was founded in 1992 and has been consistently delivering exceptional service coupled with an impressive product range. Itec has built a reputation in the industry as the fastest growing document solutions company in southern Africa supplying imaging technologies, such as multi-functional products, copiers, faxes and printers.



Itec founder and CEO, Jacques Duyver.

Six years ago, Itec was awarded sole distribution rights for the Konica brand in southern Africa. Since the merger last year of Japanese companies, Konica and Minolta, Itec now supplies the Konica Minolta brand. Itec's focus is on total solutions package and along with the Konica Minolta range, which constitutes 80% of their sales, also supplies additional product brands.

The Itec group employs over 700 people, spread amongst 65 branches, and an annual turnover of half a billion Rand. Itec expanded into the SADC region shortly after receiving the Konica distribution rights and today have franchises in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. "We have learnt some valuable lessons from the Japanese.

They are the first to establish themselves in developing countries to ensure that as the market grows, they are already well placed," says Jacques Duyver, CEO of Itec SA.

"Expansion beyond South Africa's borders is often a complimentary move. International companies expect their South African distributors to represent the SADC region, while local businesses in these regions feel more comfortable choosing South African companies as business partners. Itec has received more requests for franchises from these regions than their markets can sustain."

According to Duyver, "as a South African-based company we also have a moral and social responsibility to assist in the economic empowerment of our neighbours in the SADC region."

"Itec supplies a number of South African companies who have a presence throughout the SADC region. It is expected, as part of the total solution package, that Itec would be able to service these clients wherever they are located. This is often an assumed pre-condition to being awarded contracts from large South African companies."

The success of the branches in the SADC region is largely dependant on outside circumstances, such as the politics and economies of the countries they are based in. Four years ago, Itec Zimbabwe had a turnover of R800 000 per month. However, the recent unavailability of foreign currency in Zimbabwe makes it almost impossible for the business to contin-

ue purchasing supplies and today their R50 000 contribution to turnover represents mainly service fees.

Itec's immediate plans for the future include consolidating and strengthening their offices in the SADC region before moving onto the global market with their total solutions package.

Itec's success can be attributed to their unique franchise set-up, where they have combined the elements of a branch and a franchise. The franchisee holds all the shares in the business under strict contractual agreement, which outlines the product for sale and conditions under which they can operate, ensuring continuity for the Itec group and the customer. Itec also employs a fully integrated software system, which gives Itec head office instant access to the operations to ensure that high customer relationships and service levels are always maintained.

Itec is founded on the notion that people make the business. This is echoed in their strategy for Africa. The challenge for their African expansion strategy is similar to the challenges they face in South Africa - finding the right people to manage their interests. Itec focuses on local entrepreneurs who have a drive and passion to succeed. Once these people have been identified they are able to successfully manage the daily challenges of operating in Africa.

