

Defining reputation in Africa

By  Danette Breitenbach

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By next year the African Reputation Index (AFI) should have a country or countries from Africa to add to the data set. The plan is to start in West Africa, probably Ghana. This follows the launch of the [inaugural African Reputation Index \(AFI\)](#) by Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants recently in Sandton.



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“We started in South Africa because it is an area we know well. Now we will take it to the continent,” says Katherine du Plessis, data analyst at Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants.

The plan is also to expand beyond the sectors in the South African study. “Just as in South Africa we will look at the types of industries in each country, as they will differ from market to market,” says Moliehi Molekoa, business unit head at the company.

With little or no consensus about what corporate reputation is, coupled with related difficulties in measurement, Magna Carta decide to define corporate reputation in South Africa and Africa. “We use the definitions for reputation from the United States (US) and Europe with little research on how reputation plays out in this country and beyond our borders.”

Once they undertook the journey on defining reputation locally and on the continent, they also developed a tool to measure corporate reputation. The research was undertaken by Yellowwood. Together the two companies hosted focus groups

comprising South Africans from all backgrounds and conducting in-depth interviews with industry influencers.

The result was the definition of reputation as: “the perception that people in general hold of a company”.

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Asked why another Index, Kalay Maistry, business unit head, explains that they were looking for innovation and new technologies, as well as to add more value for their clients. “The ARI’s point of departure is very different to other Indexes of this kind which normally use trust as their point of departure. We have used the stakeholder as ours.”

She also adds that too often Indexes such as this are lumped together with the Middle East and Europe. “Yet we are very different to these regions.”

“The Index proves the newest innovation around reputation and not only provides companies and individuals with a tool to enable the appropriate response, but also allows for high level planning for reputation management,” Sechaba Motsieloa, newly appointed CEO of Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants, told attendees at the media and client launch.

“If you want to be sustainable, you need to take your reputation management seriously,” he adds.

The survey uses focus groups and in-depth interviews to obtain data. Respondents rate companies in different sectors on a series of 44 reputational drivers that are then grouped into nine reputational attributes. The sectors will vary from country to country.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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