

People auction raises funds for ABF

Three members of Starcom MediaVest Group's senior management team were auctioned off at its annual year-end bash to raise funds for the ABF - Vital Support Fund. "We were overwhelmed at the response from our media owner partners and far exceeded our initial expectations by raising over R600 000!" says group MD Gordon Patterson.

"What started off as some light-hearted fun turned out to be a crucial lifeline for an organisation that is here effectively to support everyone in the advertising, media and communications industries," he says. "We're thrilled to be able to hand over funds to allow ABF to get its finances back in the black and facilitate more assistance to affected colleagues and their families. This donation couldn't have come at a better time as we think on our friends and colleagues who have been adversely affected by this year's recession. Special mention must be made to all who successfully bid and to those who weren't present but who have committed money to the ABF."

Eve Pennington, consumer context planner who first came up with the initiative adds, "The ABF Auction required a few people to put themselves up for a good cause. It is testament to the kind of company SMG is, that our Group MD Gordon Patterson was first to accept the challenge. I think each one of us has realised how vulnerable we are in this tough economy, but the sheer amount raised by this event was completely unexpected, and demonstrates the strong business relationships we have with our media partners."

Management auction entrants

The management auction bidding began with SMG's Celia Collins who was cheerfully auctioned off to INM Outdoor for R50 000. Celia will act as 'Sales Representative' on behalf of INM, visiting media agencies, preparing proposals and presentations, dropping off client gifts and calling on its clients.

Eve Pennington was auctioned off to eNews for R60 000. Eve will have the pleasure of being 'Department Secretary' to eNews - her duties will include typing up reports, taking minutes, organising diaries and lunches, and any other tasks the team deems 'necessary'.

Gordon Patterson was auctioned off for R310 000 by SABC. Gordon will play the part of 'Company Driver', chauffeuring SABC representatives to and from work and to any meetings they're obligated to attend, washing cars, collecting lunch orders and doing deliveries.

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"I'd like to thank eNews for their extremely generous out-of-the-blue bid of R100 000 in addition to the sum they already committed in our management auction; AVUSA pledged R1500 and Mail & Guardian has confirmed a full page of media

space, valued at R58 968, which once sold will be transferred to the ABF," says Gordon.

In a surprise bid by Primedia Africa, media manager for Africa Liz Pillay was snapped up for an additional R50 000 donation, which will also be passed on to the ABF.

Giles Shepherd, president of the ABF said "We are completely overwhelmed and cannot express our appreciation enough to the group for this very welcome initiative and to all the contributors, thank you all so much for making a difference in our member's lives at a time when it is sorely needed."

Gordon concludes, "We will most certainly be repeating this gesture on an annual basis and we hope that as the economy improves, we will be able to make an even greater impact in the years to come."

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