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COUNTRY MANAGERS REPORT UNITED STATES COUNTRY REPORT

The past year saw the Washington office expanding the South African Brand and socialising the essence of the Brand among the media fraternity, business, government and academia. Following the departure of former President Thabo Mbeki, and in the wake of other negative events in the country, the drive to provide perspective and context proved especially expedient and contributed to maintaining the equity invested in the Brand.



GLOBAL SOUTH AFRICANS PROJECT

Building a network of willing people committed to championing South Africa's cause can provide significant momentum to a marketing strategy. For this reason the United States Country Manager (USMC) invested significant resources into the Global South Africans project – an initiative that engages South Africans abroad to contribute to spreading the word about the remarkable achievements and boundless opportunities that define South Africa. The commitment with which this project is driven has paid off; a significant number of new members were added during the period under review.



USA TRADE AND INVESTMENT MISSION JULY 2008

UTILISING NEW MEDIA

Continued advances in digital computing have resulted in the ever-expanding growth and influence of the so-called new media - communication environments that are readily interactive and which open new possibilities for conversation. These technologies comprise the blogging environment and social network sites such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. They open new avenues for telling South Africa's story and fostering a strong brand image. In this regard, the USCM oversaw the addition of brandsouthafrica blog.com to Brand South Africa's suite of websites to showcase the positive remarks and perceptions about the country in the online community.

An additional initiative came in the form of a bloggers tour. Over the course of a nine-day tour towards the end of 2008, nine US and two South African bloggers

(including the USCM) populated cyberspace with a stream of stories, images, pictures and sounds depicting South Africa as a resourceful, innovative and globally competitive nation, and a wonderful tourist destination. The virtual tour enhanced the reputation of both the country and the IMC, and portrayed the abundance of South Africa, from the generosity of its people to its home-grown technological sophistication. Fittingly, the tour attracted an abundance of media interest.

TRADE MISSION

The IMC and the dti have established a close working relationship around joint trade mission. Often these visits take place below the radar screen of media attention, but the USCM succeeded in generating media coverage around a joint the dti/IMC trade mission to Minnesota and Florida, two of the larger states in the USA.



TOP NINE US BLOGGER TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA