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OBSERVE'N'CONNECT MOBILE NEWS PROGRESS REPORT

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PROJECT MANAGER**

INTRODUCTION

- The Windhoek Observer has been selected by WAN-IFRA among four other Newspapers in Africa to run a project on Mobile News For Africa. A project grant of 4000 Euro has been allocated to fund this project until December 2012.
- The Windhoek Observer is the only English broad-page weekend Newspaper in Namibia. Its reporting is centered around its promise of “Setting the Nation’s Agenda”. It is rated among credible Newspapers in Namibia which provides a platform for fair, investigative and in-depth journalism
- Mobile News For Africa is a project aimed at testing, implementing and promoting innovative content production through the use of new technology. It involves delivery of news to its recipients through the use of mobile platforms

OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIVES

- **INCREASE READERSHIP THROUGH NEWS UPDATES:** Sending SMS News Alerts to update readers on current issues.
- **COMPETITIONS:** Running SMS Competition to create interaction between the Newspaper and the readers.
- **FEEDBACK:** SMS responses and contributions from our readers.
- **ADVERTISING:** Advertising the Newspaper’s website

PROGRESS

1. Teasers to sensitize and create awareness started running as adverts in the Windhoek Observer Newspaper since the 24th of August 2012.



Above is one of the adverts which was published and is still running in the Newspaper in order for readers to continuously subscribe so that they can receive FREE mobile News updates. As indicated on the advert willing subscribers have to SMS the word NEWS to a

short code 5001. Their number will automatically be saved on the system and they will be able to receive news updates every Friday.

2. News updates have already started to be sent to subscribers' mobile phones as of the Friday of the 21st of September 2012.
3. A competition to win tickets to watch Trevor Noah, a comedian from South Africa was run on two consecutive Fridays, the 14th & 21st of September 2012. Two lucky winners were announced in the Newspaper edition of the 28th of September 2012. Below is the advert which was published.



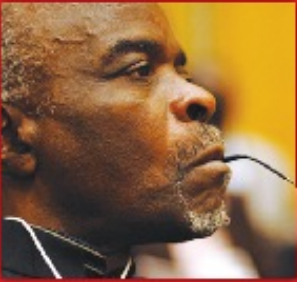
The advertisement features a red and white background. On the left, a photo of Trevor Noah is shown with the text "Lol.... Laugh out Loudest with TREVOR NOAH at the NTN." On the right, a hand holds a mobile phone with "Text 2 Win" on the screen. The main text reads "WIN a ticket to the Trevor Noah Show on the 26th of September 2012 by sending the correct answer (a), (b) or (c) to 5002". Below this, it asks "Where is Trevor Noah going to be performing in Namibia?" with options "a) FNCC, b) NTN, c) Goethe Centre". A small note at the bottom says "Winners will be notified by telephone and their names will be published on the 28th of September 2012". A red diagonal banner in the bottom right corner says "SMS is charged at N\$2". The Windhoek Observer logo is at the bottom center.

4. We have also created an interesting SMS Poll for our Newspaper called Frank Fact. The opinion poll involves interaction with our readers whereby we publish a question of the week in relevance to the current political, social and economic occurrences affecting the Nation. Readers respond to the question by following instructions as indicated below. Then results to the questions is published the subsequent week in percentages on a pie chart in order to show the public opinion. This has become talk of the town especially when questions involve public figures and controversial politicians.

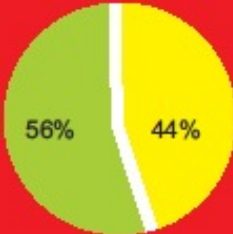
Frank Fact

Frank Fact

last week's answer




In our opinion poll last week we asked you this question:
Was it a good idea for the Prime Minister Nahas Angula to decline nomination for Swapo Party Vice Presidency?
and the results came out as shown in the piechart below;



Response	Percentage
Yes	56%
No	44%

This week's Question



In our opinion poll this week...

Frank Fact has been running for two weeks and we are inundated by the readers' responses. Above is one of Frank Fact adverts.

5. We are proud to announce that through these initiatives we have managed to cultivate over 500 mobile numbers from scratch in a society where people are not so keen to embark on new initiatives.

PROBLEMS

- Internal coordination has not been so efficient among departments at work. However, the assigned system and service provider has provided training to representatives from relevant department, ie, Advertising, Editorial and Production team. Improvement in communication has therefore improved.
- Though we are partially satisfied with the readers' responses we still feel that our cultivation of cellphone numbers can improve if we contrive ingenious ideas which will amuse readers.

FUTURE WORK

- **As we have realized that readers respond more to competitions where they have a probability to win a prize we have decided to optimize on this. Therefore we are crafting more interesting competitions where readers can SMS even more than once, and in most cases SMSes for competitions always cost more. Therefore this means a little bit of revenue being realized.**
- **We have agreed with our service provider that we will buy 2000 numbers by end of October 2012 so that we can increase our database on numbers.**

CONCLUSION

Since our primary objective involves delivery of news to its recipients through the use of mobile platforms we believe that with our stipulated objectives indicated in our main Project Plan we are in the right track to achieve this. The response which we have realized with a period of a month is quite motivating and through commitment and a little more innovation our Project will be successful.

END