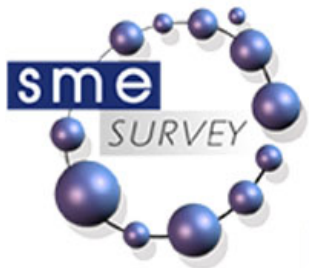


SME survey to show impact of world cup

The [SME Survey](#) 2010, sponsored by National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), will gauge the sentiments and competitiveness of South African business owners and the effect of 2010 FIFA World Cup on SMEs. The results will be released at its free Small Company, Big Voice roadshows in Johannesburg (27 October 2010), Bloemfontein (2 November) and Durban (3 November).



According to principal researcher Arthur Goldstuck, the impact of the World Cup is the big question on the minds of many. "Enormous expectations were created in terms of what the event would do for the country. Our research last year showed that 84% of SMEs expected a positive impact on the economy. However, less than half expected that it would have an impact on their own businesses. This year, we will measure whether that impact occurred - and examine if it was in line with expectations," he says.

World Cup impact

Any numbers in terms of World Cup costs and benefits right now are at best speculative but he notes that as the World Cup drew closer, it became apparent to many SMEs that the optimistically anticipated benefits might not materialise. "Short term benefits really are unlikely for SMEs; much of the action was locked down for FIFA and sponsors. However, the sense is certainly that it will deliver benefits for years to come, in terms of goodwill owing to its success, as well as infrastructure which remains." He says it is obvious that a major positive impact on the country's image and its potential for foreign investors has resulted.

Andile Lungisa, NYDA chairperson, says the work of SME Survey is arguably more important than ever, given the economic challenges faced by the country. "Many jobs have been lost with the impact of the recession. By understanding how government and the private sector can influence and stimulate the SME sector, there is the potential to elevate performance and grow employment opportunities for more South Africans.

Sustainable development, environmental issues

The survey will also test the extent to which SMEs have access to sustainable development initiatives and the extent to which they need such structures. Says Goldstuck, "To date, efforts at intervention and support have not focused on sustainable development but rather tended to be one-offs. We need to unpack their sentiments on the necessity for sustained intervention to guide understanding and policy on what will make the sector more effective." Such interventions can come from government, the private sector or a combination of the two in joint initiatives.

With environmental awareness elevating in the national consciousness, it will gauge whether business owners agree with the need for environmental awareness. "More than that, we will examine if our SMEs have embraced the concept of doing business in an environmentally friendly manner."

He does point out, however, that such notions are only likely to become pertinent once a company has established itself and become profitable. "It is worth noting that many environmentally friendly options are tied to efficiency; in the face of escalating prices of energy, that provides some pragmatic forces."

In addition to these three new research questions, he notes that survey will address a wide range of topics and factors, including IT and connectivity and key issues which keep the business owner awake at night. "We want to know what make the SME more sustainable, what keeps it competitive and what it sees as threats and risks in the dynamic South African business environment," he concludes. Go to www.smesurvey.co.za for more information.

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