

Elan Lohmann heads to Avusa



Bylssa Sikiti da Silva

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Elan Lohmann will be joining Avusa Media Online as GM on 1 August 2009 after four-and-half years at Naspers. Johannesburg-born Lohmann (32) told Bizcommunity.com in an exclusive interview that he is joining Avusa in a quest for a new challenge and a change of scenery.



"I am very happy about the appointment. I did not have a pressing reason to leave Naspers, which is a great company, but the opportunity came along and excited me. I like to make a difference and in this business I believe that I can," said Lohmann, who was previously publisher of News24 for three years, and is currently acting GM of the Property24 portal and of the MIH-Internet Africa Instant Messaging mobile communications division..

"That's what drives me. You don't shoot the lights out overnight, but being in the industry for 10 years in various managerial positions I back myself to know what to do. I have also been involved in all aspects of the business along the way which helps as well as having much experience with people on the print side of the business."

He explained: "When I joined News24 in 2005 the site had 380 000 domestic and we were neck on neck with IOL [Independent Online] and we have since have left them in the dust.

"News24 is now approaching 1.5 million. Being at the helm when we hit a million was a career highlight to be a part of as yet no other local player has done. In addition, when I joined we were making a big loss and the unit became profitable under my tenure which was a concerted team effort and satisfying to participate in.

"So, in some respects now that we have re-launched News24, which I played a major role in the layout - it seems that [News24 is well on its way.](#)"

Lohmann also founded Mynews24 and started Sport24, Netads24 and some other 24.com businesses and also headed up

the Social Media team at 24 and managed the Blueworld investment - which are now combined with other units to form 20FourLabs.

Exciting stage

"Avusa is now at an exciting stage where they have grown very strongly in the past year to pull nicely ahead of the *Mail and Guardian*. For that reason I am excited to join Avusa and lead their growth and milestones.

[Lohmann](#) started his career at the Sunday Times Online and ran the division for three years.

"When I last worked at the *Sunday Times* there was no daily [*The Times*] and we were always starved for content during the week, which in a 24/7 always-on medium is not a fun place to be. I think having a daily title and a team of journalists on your side is a strength in a market that is dominated by Sapa and other syndication sources.

"If you took Sapa content away the online news market in South Africa would be desolate and in that respect I think The Times Online can have an edge. But remember that my portfolio as GM of online at Avusa Media is not only about the *Sunday Times*. There are many publications in the group and the *Sowetan* is another area where I can see fantastic potential."

Nevertheless, Lohmann heads to Avusa, wary of tough challenges ahead, especially in these hostile economic times...

"Every job has its challenges. If it were all on a plate then Avusa would not really need me. I am a catalyst and a change agent. It's up to me to build the case for what is required. I also believe that if things are not working in a certain way there is always another. Ultimately I am arriving with an agenda to make an impact and hopefully Avusa is ready for me."

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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