

Social-TV spotlights stories that inspire hope

 By [Sandy Peters](#)

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[Social-TV](#) is an online media channel that showcases company CSI and sustainable development initiatives while highlighting charity organisations that need funding.

Launched two years ago, the news channel also seeks to empower young people with journalism, video, production and social media skills.

We chatted to spokesperson for Social-TV Diane Naidoo-Ngcse to find out what inspired the launch of Social-TV, what the platform's key goals are, and her take on the CSI space in South Africa.

■ ***Who are the masterminds behind Social-TV, and how did the idea to launch such a unique platform come about?***

Samm Marshall, seasoned media personality and serial entrepreneur is the brains behind Social-TV. Having worked across sports (*Sunrise* on e), reality television (*Let's Fix It* on e-tv), and current affairs and lifestyle news (*SABC Morning Live*), Samm identified a gap in the market for 'good news stories', and more specifically, a channel or platform which would celebrate the good which many corporates are investing in to deliver positive social impact. In addition, most corporates relegate good news (CSI stories) to annual CSI reports which are only shared with an internal, almost exclusive audience. So, tired of the sales-driven 'if it bleeds, it leads' approach to news, he developed a web-based platform called Social-TV which would carry the stories that inspire hope and deliver social change in SA.

■ ***What are the key goals for the platform?***

One short-term goal is that Social-TV becomes more than an information hub, and more of a knowledge-sharing, best-practice sharing platform where corporates and philanthropists are able to identify effective models for CSI and sustainable social change. All too often, success stories are not shared, and there is very little collaboration between and amongst corporates, even if scaling up an idea could deliver far more impact. As a long-term goal, it is intended that corporates would start to engage with each other, and in certain instances, develop public-private partnerships, and implement projects that offer the greatest possible benefit to the community. At Social-TV, we believe that if we want to go fast, corporates can go it alone. But if we want to go far, we need to go together. Collaboration is critical to development.



Social-TV spokesperson Diane Naidoo-Ngcse

What have been some of your achievements over the last two years?

In the past two years we have managed to set our foot in the CSI space. We attended and covered the Trialogue conference this year, and conversed with leaders in the CSI and sustainable development sector. We were the media partner in the recently ended Eskom Small Business Expo at the Ticket Pro Dome, Johannesburg. Our channel, as well as social media platforms, has attracted a lot of companies and NPOs thus bringing the world of CSI into life. In terms of skills development, we have trained two videographers and two journalists.

Why do you think it's important to make the public aware of the many CSI initiatives in SA?

There are many reasons why it is important to raise public awareness. For starters, there are still many companies, big businesses whose investments have delivered, and continue to deliver on national priorities, such as education, skills development, job creation, and healthcare. Often companies are not quite aware of where to begin, so sharing information, telling their stories, particularly of partnerships with civil society, NPOs, and NGOs which have been effective. In addition, our country has a growing entrepreneurship

and small business economy, and lack of funding is often the biggest hurdle for start-ups to launch their own businesses. Through platforms such as Social-TV, aspirant entrepreneurs can find out more about the requirements for starting out, identifying potential corporate sponsors and also read about success stories. And really, success stories are of paramount importance as the fear of failure can hinder, or even impose dormancy on many great business ideas before they have even started.

What is your take on the CSI space in South Africa?

CSI is evolving in South Africa – we are fast moving away from simply throwing money at causes, we are now demanding more bang for our buck in terms of corporate social investment. What this means is that decision-makers are in a way, demanding that their spend delivers tangible returns. They want to see, for example, after buying books for a school, that there are more children passing certain subjects, that more matriculants are coping at university, that they are graduating, that their living standards are improving because of their investment. So the CSI spend is a lot more long-term than it's been previously – corporates are giving their investments a chance to mature, much in the same way that they would with long-term horizon investment portfolios. The private sector has also recognised that as a society, we cannot wait on government to meet all the needs across education, healthcare, housing, employment – they have a part to play in creating the country their businesses need to thrive in. And they recognise that their active citizenship is critical to growing a sustainable economy – in essence, their investment is about developing the talent pool they will rely on to sustain their business into the future.

What are some of the most important areas for corporates to focus on when planning their CSI initiatives?

The key areas are: education, energy, water, food, health and entrepreneurship. There are many, but as a start, education is key. It's the one tool that has the ability to level the plains of opportunity for all. Then of course, there are critical areas such as the food-water-energy nexus. Our ability to offer energy security for industry is important if we are to grow our economy, and perhaps more importantly, we need to invest in sustainable clean sources of energy. This has a direct impact on water security, which in turn, impacts our food security in the country. In addition, our current healthcare system does not provide for everyone and we need to be more innovative in the way in which we make quality affordable healthcare accessible to all. Then, the issue of unemployment which in many respects necessitates a thriving entrepreneurship economy. Big business continues to shed jobs every quarter and graduates (and those who are still at high school) have few options in terms of finding jobs in the formal, big business environment. The National Development Plan touts the small business sector as one which is able to deliver on 90% of the jobs our economy requires, so investment

in entrepreneurs is uber important.

■ Which CSI project has stood out most for you thus far in 2016?

One of the big ones for me has to be JP Morgan's scholarship programme offered by GIBS Enterprise Development Academy, targeting 100 small businesses in the green economy. The timing of this initiative, in the context of the growing South African green economy, could not have been better. From the first 50 candidates Social-TV engaged with, there was such a diversity of entrepreneurs who are changing the shape of South Africa's economy through sustainable innovations. One is a young woman entrepreneur who manufactures solar-powered bags, another a former banker who has created a mobile ice-skating rink introducing the poorer black youth to the sport, without using any water or electricity. When you see a multinational investment banking firm who understands the power and value of green economy entrepreneurs, the future looks bright.



After 20 years of experience in the local PR & communications arena, Diane Naidoo-Ngcse launched GreenOvation, a publication focused on sustainability, innovation and social enterprise. She's a touch obsessed about clean energy and innovating food and water solutions for Africa. Naidoo-Ngcse is also a self-confessed stalker of all start-up, entrepreneurship, innovation and climate change events where she finds herself tweeting compulsively. She is the editor of GreenOvation, MD of The Alchemist PR, and spokesperson for Social-TV.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

Sindy Peters (@sindy_hullaba_lou) is a group editor at Bizcommunity.com on the Construction & Engineering, Energy & Mining, and Property portals. She can be reached at sindy@bizcommunity.com

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