

Woolworths Foods leads Orange Index Awards

The 2012 Orange Index Customer Service Benchmarking & Social Profiling Awards, held last week in Johannesburg, saw Woolworths Foods win the overall award and the Food Retail category, for the fourth time. Overall runner-up was BMW, followed by Pick n Pay, Woolworths Clothing and Sanlam.



Other brands in the top ten were MultiChoice DStv, Old Mutual, Volkswagen, Toyota and Edgars. Andre Rademeyer, CEO of Ask Africa, the research house behind the awards, and Bernard Beukman, general manager of *Rapport* and *Beeld*, the event sponsors, presented winners with their trophies.

Sarina de Beer, MD of Ask Afrika, presented a summary of current trends in the South African marketplace forecasting the impact on our society and government, of service expectations and government performance. She laid emphasis on the fact that consumers are morphing into citizens and hailed the concept of humanity - seeing the customer as more than a potential meal ticket - in the service industry.

"There has to be a balance between transactional service excellence and social contracting in the private sector. However, operational excellence is in fact a basic expectation and will not build social commitment on its own. This is where the humanity of the consumer must be paramount."

Theme of (non)service delivery

The theme of (non)service delivery, a topic especially close to the heart of CEO Rademeyer, formed the basis of a candid panel discussion, featuring panellists Kamogelo Mmutlana (CEO, Fleet Africa), Mmusi Maimane (DA national spokesperson), Dr Mzukisi Qobo (political risk analyst at the University of Pretoria) and John October (executive head: HR, training and sales for Telesure.)

A further panel discussion was conducted with representatives of industry leaders for 2012: Marco Vazzol (Woolworths), Guy Kilfoil (BMW), Sechaba Motsieola (McDonalds), Ed Carrell (ABSA) and Sarah Lubbe (Vodacom). Their topic was "What's the name of the game" and the unanimous answer was service excellence; especially in the light of the 2012 drop of 5.2% overall, in local service levels.

Kilfoil commented that whilst many of his customers might not know the difference if blindfolded and put in a German precision motor car, the service levels delivered by BMW would certainly be a major differentiat in the relevant automobile sector.