

EL's Fusion develops franchise model

Employees take up the challenge to become directors and run their own business



INDUSTRY STALWARTS: Fusion East London director Jason Van der Walt with Fusion Eastern Cape directors Mawonga Simelane and Sabelo Jela

Pictures: NICOLETTE SCROOBY



FOUNDERS: Fusion Office Automation East London directors Jason Van der Walt and Andrew Gardener started their company 10 years ago and have now developed a franchise model

By NICOLETTE SCROOBY

THE Fusion Office Automation Group has successfully rooted themselves in East London over the past 10 years. Now the company, which has branches all over the Eastern Cape, and clients all over the country has developed a franchise model for their business which specialises in the sale, rental and servicing of office automation equipment, like photocopiers, and telecoms.

Directors Jason Van der Walt and Andrew Gardener were enthusiastic about the new direction the company was branching into. Jason said: "This model is really exciting for our group as it affords extremely talented industry professionals the opportunity to own and run their own business."

"Once an agreement has been reached with our franchise partners, we customise an Enterprise Development Agreement (EDA) for their specific franchise. Essentially it's a document which outlines specific timelines and deliverables that their business needs to systematically achieve over a three-year time-frame in order for their franchise to navigate the tricky start up phase of any business."

"We assess the franchise partners upfront, and if they are strong in terms of sales experience, for example, then our EDA focuses more on business processes and financial management. Essentially we customise their EDA to cater to their strengths."

Sabelo Jela and Mawonga Simelane have signed up for a franchise deal making Fusion

Eastern Cape the first 100 percent black owned office automation company in the Eastern Cape.

The two, who have numerous years' worth of industry knowledge, are now directors of their own company. "Sabelo and Mawonga are two exceptional talents. These guys worked for established opposition brands for 10 to 15 years. If we had never intervened, they would likely never have been afforded the opportunity to own their own company," said Jason.

Sabelo said: "A wonderful opportunity has been afforded to us by Jason and Andrew. Mawonga and I have been working alongside each other for the past fifteen years, under the guidance and tutelage of an industry titan - Mitford Thomson, former managing director of Nashua East London. It is a blessing that we can now take all the knowledge gained and years of experience in the industry to build something that is truly ours."

Mawonga said: "It's so beautiful to be part of a young, energetic and progressive group of people. We look forward to many years of growth and success."

The Fusion Group are in advanced stages of negotiations with another industry stalwart - formerly one of the major opposition players - to join Fusion's Port Elizabeth branch. An announcement will be made in terms of the Fusion Port Elizabeth partner soon.

Jason said: "The franchise model is not only a platform which affords external talent



SKY'S THE LIMIT: Dylan Cloete is the Fusion Transkei business partner

from the industry an opportunity to own their own enterprise, but it obviously affords the same opportunity to internal, long serving Fusion staff. Dylan Cloete bears testament to this - Dylan is the Fusion Transkei business partner."

"Dylan is a brilliant Fusion-man, he has walked a really long road with our group and when the Transkei opportunity first came around it was a no-brainer that he was our man. His business is flying and the sky is the limit for Dylan," said Jason.

Dylan said: "The Transkei holds a lot of opportunity, promise and adventure as that's the culture that goes with it. It's unique and requires a different outlook on things and this is what motivates our team as each day holds such different challenges and opportunities to your normal every day life and we love it. It either grabs you or it doesn't. In our case it has grabbed us in a big way."

Fusion Office Automation was currently involved in negotiations with partners in Johannesburg and Cape Town to take their brand to all corners of the country.

"We are also looking for other franchise partners. Our franchise model offers both part and full ownership agreements and models," Jason said.

Fusion Office Automation are approved business partners with Ricoh, which offer a range of industry leading managed document services, production printing, office printers and photocopiers. Fusion Office Automation also has a Telecoms division offering cost-saving VoIP and PABX solutions to clients.

Directors and staff of Fusion Office Automation

pride themselves on service delivery with technicians who are on call 24/7 to attend to any service issues which may occur.

Jason said they were excited to be involved with so many new company ventures.

"We are proud of all our achievements over the past 10 years. Now we are soaring to new heights and we're excited to change the industry dynamics."

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SERVICE WITH A SMILE: Technicians Warren Hechter and Siyazama Tetyana service a photocopy machine. Fusion specialises in the sale, rental and servicing of office automation equipment such as photocopiers, and telecoms



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