

December 2008 – January 2009

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The FTA supports HGR but is in no official way associated with the magazine.





*Wishing all
our readers
and advertisers a
Merry Christmas &
peace and prosperity in
the New Year.*

**Ian, Aurette, Frances, Bianca, Sameera,
Kerryn, Cherry and Sumaya**

**HGR will be closed from
12 December 2008 to
12 January 2009**

**Congratulations to the winner of our Reader Survey
– Johan Smuts of Outeniqua Matte.
He wins a Philips Portable DVD Player.**

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87 retailers recognised as Darlings of Gauteng at inaugural retail awards

Scoring top points for spontaneous awareness, usage, overall quality, value for money, range of products and service, 87 retailers were recognised as the Darlings of Gauteng at the inaugural annual retail awards hosted by Avusa media titles The Times and Sowetan.

The winning Gauteng retailers were honoured at a gala awards celebration held at the theatrical Dome venue at Constitutional Hill on October 30.

"As done with our Top Brands and Wealth surveys, we wanted to acknowledge and provide insight into their standing with Gauteng consumers," says Avusa Media general manager: advertising revenue and strategic communications Enver Groenewald.

To acquire this all-important information, The Times and Sowetan commissioned Ipsos Markinor to conduct quantifiable research across the metro areas of Gauteng where shopping is regarded as a national sport. Respondents had to rate retailers across 29 categories using the six criteria. This was statistically analysed and a composite retail barometer score compiled for each retailer in each category to determine rankings. Respondents were also asked demographic questions, which included how old they were and what financial services products they used.

The sample was representative of the LSM profile of both The Times (LSM seven to ten) and the Sowetan (LSM four to eight) and conducted with adults 18 years of age and older. A total of

1000 interviews were conducted face-to-face in the homes of the respondents and in their home language from late July to mid-August this year.

"In the current economic downturn, quality is now more important than ever," says Groenewald. "Quality products give value for money, which is crucial. For example, a well-made electrical appliance or a classic piece of furniture actually lasts longer, which saves costs over time. South African consumers aren't only aspirational but also discerning shoppers who know what they want."

Groenewald points out that although many individuals are tightening their belts and looking for value they won't sacrifice quality and buy an inferior product. "Local retailers have become more sophisticated. New luxury ranges can now be found on the shelves of many of the bigger retailers with various price entry points, so there is something for everyone. Another area where mass retailers are getting it right and following international trends is in providing breakaway specialist stores. These stores often focus on one product and consumers are offered superior goods, advice and service without feeling ripped off."

And the winners are...

Of the 29 categories, three were specifically applicable to HGR readers. In the department stores category Game took the top spot, followed by Edgars and Woolworths. Dion achieved fourth place. According to a report in The Times and Sowetan, Game



Jacques Lambert (middle) from @home accepts the second place award in the home and lifestyle stores category from Avusa Media general manager: advertising revenue and strategic communications Enver Groenewald (second from left). With them is host of the event Gerry Rantselli (far left) and Fikile-Ntsikelelo Moya, editor of The Sowetan.



Cheryl Collier (right) of Mr Price Home, winner of the home and lifestyle stores category, with Avusa Media general manager: advertising revenue and strategic communications Enver Groenewald (left) and Fikile-Ntsikelelo Moya, editor of The Sowetan (right).

merchandise director Tyrone Vieira says the company's strategy involves building a brand that encompasses quality and value and one that the public can trust. "We work to ensure that our message is consistent, with a focus on presenting value. Our three guarantees of price, warranty and after-sales service are the cornerstone of the business and help to promote our brand while giving consumers the reassurance that if anything goes wrong they have recourse."

Product mix is also a crucial element in Game's strategy and consists of a blend between predominantly known brands and selected private labels. "Game is primarily a branded business to reinforce our value proposition for our customers," says Vieira. "They know the brands and can associate with them."

In the category for electronic, computer and gadget stores, Game again emerged the winner, with Hi-Fi Corporation second and Makro third. Dion achieved sixth place, followed by Incredible Connection. Vieira says the electronics side of Game's business is very price-driven. "Our focus on costs means we are able to make technology more affordable and attract more technology customers to the market."

"Our strategy is to attract buyers. If we constantly bring down the price of computer hardware, laptops, plasma televisions and LCDs, we expand our business by bringing in more buyers."

One of the problems facing electronics retailers, says Vieira, is the rapid rate at which technology evolves and products are replaced. Retailers have to maintain a balance between having enough stock to meet consumer demand, but not carrying too much so that they are caught with older products on their hands when manufacturers release new models. "In some areas, if you do not turn your stock within three months, you end up with obsolete products."

Mr Price Home was declared winner of the home and lifestyle stores category, with @Home taking second position, followed by Russells, Morkels, Bradlows, Geen & Richards, Joshua Doore,

Boardmans, Furniture City and Beares.

According to The Times and Sowetan report, Ispos-Markinor deputy chief executive Heidi Brauer says Mr Price Home's higher awareness among consumers is what earned this store the top position. "Both do well when it comes to offering value for money and, although prices can be higher in one than the other, quality and brand values can add more value and help to create a perception of value for money."

"Awareness has real value in the marketplace, but retailers have to make sure that they achieve well in other areas if they are to develop sustainable brands. Retailers with the highest square metres and advertising spend cannot get away from the importance of the brand experience that consumers have in their stores. There has to be pull-through from the brand promise so that when consumers are attracted into the store, the experience is consistent with that promise." ■



Basil de Lange of Makro accepted the third place award in the electronic, computer and gadget stores category.



Russels achieved third place in the home and lifestyle stores category. Virna Smith accepted the award from Enver Groenewald (left) and Fikile-Ntsikelelo Moya (right).



Vis Gouden of Game (centre) collects the winner's award in the electronic, computer and gadget stores category from The Times editor Ray Hartley (left) and Enver Groenewald of Avusa. The company also won the department stores category.

Ipsos Markinor conducts Sunday Times 2008 Top Brands survey

This year marks the tenth year partnership of the Ipsos Markinor/Sunday Times Top Brands Survey, the only research-based, consumer-driven guide to brand performance in South Africa, aiming to better understand the way in which brands are perceived and experienced by all types of consumers. The survey is well respected by marketers and brand managers, and is considered an accurate reflection of what is happening at the consumer coalface.

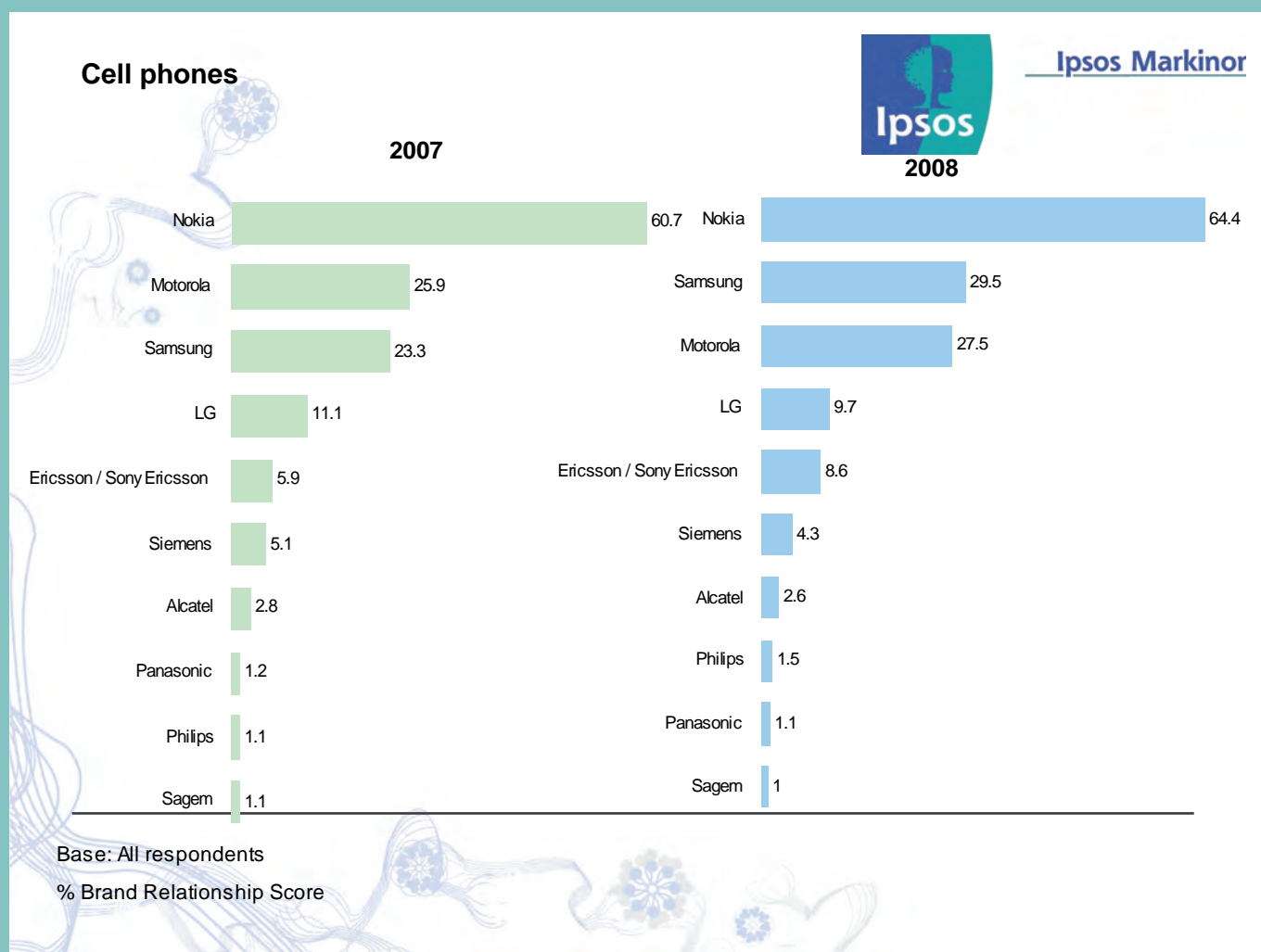
The survey comprises two modules with the business-to-consumer module including 27 categories, and the business-to-business module

12 categories. The victors of the Ipsos Markinor/Sunday Times Top Brands survey have historically come in two forms: the leader of the Grand Prix questions and the frontrunner of each of the industry categories.

The Grand Prix questions are solo, spontaneous questions like 'what is your favourite brand' or 'who has done the most to uplift the community.' The category winners are awarded based on a composite metric called the Brand Relationship Score (BRS), which is an assemblage of three factors: spontaneous awareness, level of trust & confidence and commitment.

Business-to-consumer

The business-to-consumer module targets all adults aged 16 and older, residing in South Africa. The sample of 3500 respondents, of which 2000 are from metro areas and 1500 from non-metro areas, was randomly selected and is thus truly representative of our proverbial rainbow nation. It included people from all population groups, languages, geographical areas (even deep rural areas) and income groups and, because a probability sample was used, results were weighted back to represent the universe from which it was drawn. Interviews were conducted face-



2008 winners of the cell phone category in the business-to-consumer module.

to-face and in the respondents' language of choice to ensure understandability.

In the cell phones category Nokia again took first place, with Samsung moving up from third position in 2007 to second place this year. Motorola took third place, down from last year's second spot, while LG retained its fourth position. Occupying the remaining ten spots were Ericsson/Sony Ericsson, Siemens, Alcatel, Philips, Panasonic and Sagem.

Business-to-business

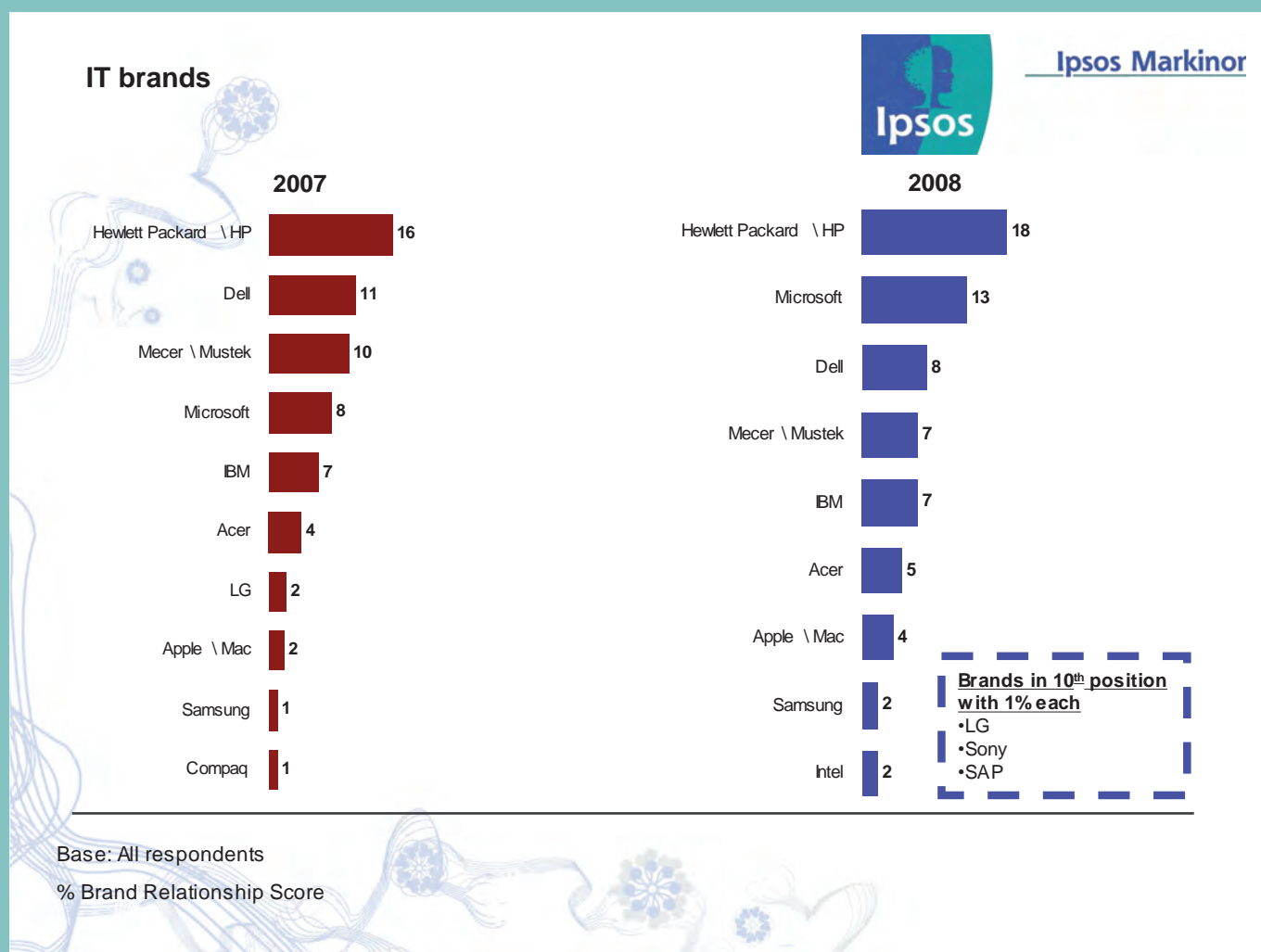
Realising that certain brands, such as IT brands are really only experienced

by business individuals, a second module was introduced to the Top Brands Survey in 2004, aimed at gaining insights from business leaders, as the sample aims to be as representative as possible of the South African business environment.

A sample of 400 telephonic interviews were conducted among C-level individuals from various industries (such as chief executive officers, chief finance officers, managing directors and any other directors) and respondents were from companies with a staff base of 100 or more employees. Respondents' names were randomly sourced

utilising a customised database from Matrix Marketing, one of the leaders in business-to-business database management. Fieldwork for both modules was conducted in April and May 2008 and a minimum of 20 per cent back-check was administered on each interviewer's work.

In the IT brands category Hewlett Packard again emerged the winner, followed by Microsoft (up two positions from last year), Dell (down one position), Mecer/Mustek (down one position) and IBM. Acer took sixth place, followed by Apple, Samsung and Intel. LG, Sony and SAP tied in tenth position. ■



2008 winners of the IT brands category in the business-to-business module.

JD Group turnover, profits down but cash flow remains strong

While difficult trading conditions have severely impacted sales and margins, and bad debts have further eroded profit, the JD Group reports that it is still enjoying strong cash flows and the underlying quality of its receivables remains intact.

Group revenue in the year to August 2008 declined by 2.4 per cent to R12.6 billion (2007: R12.9 billion), attributable, says executive chairman David Sussman, to the reduction in consumer discretionary income. Operating profit decreased by 50 per cent to R797 million (R1.6 billion) and net profit attributable to ordinary shareholders was down by 54 per cent to R514 million (R1.1 billion).

Sussman cites a decrease in demand for consumer credit as the reason for the traditional retail division's 11.6 per cent decline in revenue for the year to R5.2 billion (2007: R5.9 billion). "The furniture chains were forced to cut prices to maintain market share, significantly reducing margins by 2.8 per cent year-on-year. While this division contained costs to a creditable 1.9 per cent increase on 2007, this was not enough to offset the lower margin, with a resultant decrease in operating profit from R531 million to R111 million. Worth mentioning in the traditional retail division are the two entry-level chains, Price 'n' Pride and Barnett's, which fared significantly better than the other chains."

The group's cash retail division, which consists of Incredible Connection and Hi-Fi Corporation, delivered revenue growth of four per cent to R4.0 billion from R3.9 billion in 2007, but operating profit was down 14.8 per cent on the prior year.

"Incredible Connection performed exceptionally well, growing its market share, with top line sales up 17.1 per cent and an operating margin at 7.6 per cent," Sussman continues. "Hi-Fi Corporation was subjected to increased competition, exacerbated by lower consumer demand but, although top line sales declined by 5.4 per cent year-on-year, there was a slight improvement in gross margin. Reported operating profit was an

acceptable six per cent, albeit down on last year."

Commenting on the two years that have passed since the credit cycle turned, Sussman says arrear payments on the company's receivables have increased since July 2006. "The downturn we are currently experiencing was exacerbated by the proliferation of credit offered to consumers in the run up to the introduction of the National Credit Act (NCA). The unprecedented appetite for debt, and the eagerness to supply it over the past few years, has resulted in the consumers' current state of over indebtedness."

Bad debt write offs and impairment provisions increased by 8.8 per cent year-on-year, causing a 20 per cent decline in operating margin.

Strategic repositioning

In January 2006 the group separated its financial services division from that of traditional retail. "The time spent evaluating the separation during the past two years highlighted many issues and potential pitfalls," says Sussman. "Ideally we would like to be a year ahead of where we are today, but the process was deferred to ensure full compliance with the NCA. Our focus now is on implementing our planned strategy, which includes driving greater efficiencies throughout the organisation."

"The separation of the two divisions also highlighted the inappropriate overhead structure in traditional retail, which is being addressed to allow this division to achieve its full potential," Sussman continues. "During the 2009 financial year our focus will be to bed down the new structure into the five operating divisions: traditional retail, cash retail, international retail, financial services and our new business development division."

"We have already implemented separate management structures for each division, with major impact on both traditional retail and financial services.



David Sussman – *expecting improved earnings next year.*

This separation allows us to develop specialised skill sets in each division, leading to improved service levels throughout the group."

Positive outlook

Despite the current difficult trading conditions Sussman is bullish about the company's long-term prospects. "The question remains as to when the consumer demand cycle will turn. Top line sales in the traditional retail division have improved in the two months subsequent to the year-end. Bad debts have shown a 15 per cent decline over the same period and it is particularly pleasing to see arrears in rand terms showing a reduction."

"Notwithstanding our very conservative expectation for top line growth in the year ahead, we expect a pleasing improvement in earnings. Not only will management continue to focus on margin improvement, but the completion of the separation of financial services from traditional retail will bring increased efficiencies and financial benefits in 2009." ■

Lewis grows in tough times

Despite "extremely difficult trading conditions" Lewis group has reported a five per cent increase in revenue to R1803 million in its six-month interim results to September 2008, despite a decline in merchandise sales by 0.7 per cent to R890.3 million.

Gross margin declined from 34.1 to 33.1 per cent, but after adjusting for forward exchange gains which are reflected under finance costs, the margin declined from 33.7 to 33.4 per cent. Operating costs, excluding debtor costs, increased by 5.2 per cent, "as a result of the continued drive for operational efficiency in the business," the company's chief executive Alan Smart says. "In particular, employment costs have increased by 1.2 per cent, reflecting lower staff levels and the impact of variable remuneration."

Debtors costs increased from three to 4.5 per cent of net debtors in a tightening collection environment. Cash generated from operations for the period under review was R382 million, an increase of 27.8 per cent over the corresponding period.

The group's core retail business of furniture and appliances, which make up 80 per cent of sales, grew by two per cent. The sound and vision section (20 per cent of total sales), a consumer discretionary spend, declined by 11 per cent. Lewis division grew revenue by 4.8 per cent, Best Electric's revenue increased by 11.6 per cent and Lifestyle Living's declined by 10.1 per cent.

Smart has reaffirmed Lewis' prime strategy of "sourcing exclusive merchandise which offers the customer genuine value for money." This strategy has resulted in encouraging increases in the furniture product category, constituting 54 per cent of group sales.

"Best Electric has similarly benefited from the introduction of furniture lines and following a store revamp programme, additional ranges are displayed and the name changed to Best Home and Electric," he continues. "A pilot test under the Lewis brand of a small store concept utilising electronic catalogues and compact displays has produced

encouraging results and will form part of future expansion plans in high-traffic areas.

"Improved customer segmentation allowed us to target our reserve strategies and promotional offers more effectively, enabling our stores to interface with the most creditworthy current and settled customers," he adds. "Credit scorecards are regularly updated to maintain the credit risk levels. The credit application decline rate is now 24.5 per cent compared to 21.6 per cent.

Whilst Smart expects trading to remain difficult, he believes the upcoming peak trading season will be supported by strong promotions and inventory to maximise sales opportunities. "We will continue to expand cautiously and should benefit from the consolidation in the industry." ■



Alan Smart –
expanding cautiously.



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Basic site: R2500 + VAT

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Flash design:

Quote per project.

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For all your website design requirements contact Frances @ HGR 011 447 9326

ELLERINES *earnings 'disappointing'*

Micro lender African Bank Investments (Abil) has described Ellerines' headline earnings of R368 million for the nine months to 30 September as "disappointing", saying the results were negatively impacted by a relatively weak sales performance, higher bad debts incurred on business written in its previous financial year, and the fact that group's peak trading quarter was not consolidated in these results.

African Bank increased headline earnings by eight per cent to R1.442 billion. "We commenced with our price/volume elasticity strategy three years ago, and consequently have experienced significant growth which, combined with strong cost control, has driven an expansion of the market we serve," says Abil CEO Leon Kirkinis.

"Ellerines, on the other hand, has only begun to implement its restructuring programme and therefore its under-performance largely reflects present market dynamics."

Kirkinis anticipates the Ellerines acquisition to be dilutive to the economic profit generated by Abil until 2010.

Sales of merchandise at Ellerines over the nine months was R3 092 million, 13 per cent lower than the equivalent period in 2007. Cash sales increased by 11.3 per cent while credit sales reduced by 31.6 per cent.

"The challenging economic environment, brought about by rising inflation and high interest rates, has had a negative impact on the Ellerines customer," says Ellerines CEO Toni Fourie. "Additionally, the intentional tightening

of credit granting criteria post the acquisition by Abil, has had the biggest impact on sales."

The percentage of sales facilitated by credit fell to 44.3 per cent, from 56.4 per cent in the equivalent period last year. The tightening of credit has had the most impact on the Ellerines brand, which includes the Ellerines, FurnCity, Savells Fairdeal and Town Talk, where the majority of sales are done on credit. In this market position sales reduced by 23 per cent relative to the same period last year.

The brands that target the middle income consumer, Beares and Lubners, have increased their sales by two per cent. Fourie partially attributes this to product and credit price reduction strategies. "This had the effect of reducing the Ellerines brand contribution to sales from 45 to 39 per cent, while the Beares market position contribution increased from 18 to 21 per cent."

"We expect the restructuring of Ellerines to gain momentum in the 2009 financial year," he declares. "Our retail activities will begin to benefit from changes made to our merchandising strategy, as well as the cost reductions emanating from the organisational restructure and brand optimisation strategy previously announced."

"We expect to complete the migration of Ellerines financial services activities into African Bank, which should enable us to reduce the cost of credit while improving the risk parameters of the business. We also expect to largely complete the restructuring of Ellerines balance sheet and funding base."

"Ultimately, we expect these initiatives to double Ellerines' sales over the next four years, driving appropriate returns on this investment."

Kirkinis adds: "Notwithstanding the uncertainties in the macro-economic environment, Abil enters the new financial year with a strong balance sheet, clear operational objectives and every confidence in our ability to make further substantive progress towards our medium term strategic objectives." ■

CEA elects new office bearers



The Consumer Electronics Association elected new office bearers at its annual general meeting held in September. These are (left) Dolf van den Berg (director), Ben Hunt (distributors committee), Dave Gottlieb (chairperson), Steve Karele (manufacturers committee), Viv Roney (technical committee) and Martin Maddox (vice-chairperson, who was not present when the photo was taken). ■

A man for all seasons

Year after year Selborne Carpets turns in performances that make their competitors wince, albeit tempered with a degree of admiration. Headed up by the redoubtable Basil Kretzmer, 2008's stern challenges seems to have proved no more than an irritant.

"We've certainly done better than last year," says Kretzmer. "In revenue terms we have increased by at least five per cent, although I would point out that the trade has been subjected to a couple of price increases in the course of the year. Nevertheless, we have done better than expected and I am very proud of our performance."

Pressed for an explanation, Kretzmer remarks that Selborne "always sticks to the basics. We always look for value-for-money products that would be attractive to our customers. We try very hard to ensure supply continuity, never forgetting that it is a two-way partnership between manufacturers and ourselves. Finally, and critically, we never forget our customers.

We strive to look after them and to improve our service constantly. This has been our guiding philosophy from day one, and it clearly works."

In pursuit of his ideal of service excellence, Kretzmer has had all Selborne's 20 delivery vehicles fitted with satellite tracking systems. He explains: "This is a very hi-tech, costly and sophisticated system, but it is more than repaying our outlay and enables our transport manager to control our transport fleet from his office.

At any time, he can locate any of our trucks, no matter where they are – in a parking lot, filling up at a petrol station or anywhere on the road. We can also track their speed and driving habits. Moreover, if they cannot locate their customer, they can phone in as we have provided each driver with a cell phone and our transport manager can see exactly where they are and direct them accurately to their destination.

Initially, the drivers were wary of the system, but soon realised the advantages



Bernie and Basil Kretzmer in the Selborne Carpets showroom with some of the Berry Floor range the company now stocks and sells.

and benefits it offers and are now enthusiastic supporters. Our customers are the biggest beneficiaries and have strongly welcomed the implementation of the system. They now know exactly when to expect deliveries of their orders. I am thrilled that it's proven to be so successful."

In terms of products, Kretzmer intimates that the big volume sellers remain the Berbers and cords. "Belgotex's entry level Conqueror is still proving very popular. Nouwens has just introduced a

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Panasonic eyes Sanyo

Panasonic plans to acquire smaller rival Sanyo Electric, thereby creating Japan's top electronics maker and foreshadowing further consolidation in an industry hit by slowing consumer demand.

The acquisition will fortify Panasonic's competitiveness in rechargeable batteries and solar power equipment as demand grows for greener energy sources. Panasonic has not said what it might pay for Sanyo, or what it plans to do with the latter's loss-making businesses such as home appliances and microchips.

Panasonic, the world's top plasma TV maker formerly known as Matsushita Electric, wants Sanyo because of its leading position in rechargeable batteries, which are widely used in mobile phones, PCs, music players and increasingly to power cars.

The deal will also enable Panasonic to enter the solar market. Sanyo is the world's seventh-largest solar cell maker, trailing Germany's Q-Cells, Japan's Sharp Corp and Suntech Power Holdings of China.

"Adverse business conditions are making it difficult for us to achieve the kind of growth we have been striving for," says Panasonic president Fumio Ohtsubo. "We need a new growth engine within our group."

Panasonic and Sanyo, both based in Osaka, central Japan, have historical ties. Sanyo's founder was a brother-in-law of Panasonic's founder Konosuke Matsushita. Although these ties may not directly affect the outcome of a deal, analysts say they could help make for a smoother acquisition because of shared corporate cultures.

Sanyo was regarded as a relative loser in Japan's crowded electronics sector until hopes surfaced recently about a Panasonic takeover. In recent years, Sanyo has shed unprofitable operations and slashed jobs to focus on its core businesses. It swung to profit in the fiscal year that ended in March for the first time in four years.

To win Sanyo, Panasonic will have to buy out its top three shareholders, Daiwa Securities SMBC, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Co and Goldman Sachs, which bailed out the company in 2006. ■



Toshimasa Lue (left), a member of the family that founded Sanyo and the company's president Seichiro Sano.



Sanyo's headquarters in Moriguchi, Osaka, Japan.



Wetherlys Kya Sands branch manager Peta-Lynn Smidn with sales manager Greg Ramen in front of the newly relaunched Wetherlys store.

Wetherlys' new luxury flagship store in Kya Sands, northern Johannesburg, covers an artistically planned shopping area of 8000m², the equivalent of 16 rugby fields.

Addressing guests at the opening of the store in November, managing executive Mark Hartwig said the vast quantity of distinctive, world-class furniture and accessories to be found in the suavely decorated store would satisfy the most discerning client.

"Our store will appeal to everyone in the family. The new Wetherlys Kids section comprises a tenth of the store and includes a secure play area. As an added service, it will soon have qualified child-minders so that parents can enjoy browsing through the magnificent offerings, knowing that their children are being well looked after."

The massive complex has been restyled to the highest world-class standards. The VIP Room features plush carpets, air conditioning and wireless connectivity, ideal for executives to discuss their decorating needs with Wetherlys' own décor experts.

Wetherlys

opens 8000m² shoppers' paradise



The new Wetherlys Kids section showcases the latest in children's bedroom furnishings.



The coffee shop opens out onto a beautiful, restful garden and is the perfect location for meeting friends and enjoying high tea.

Wetherlys has expanded its selection of exquisite décor and items such as imported wallpaper and curtaining, exclusive art, wrought iron finials and rods are now on offer. Additionally, new gift range includes unique items sourced from all over the world.

Another innovative offering that will soon be available is Wetherlys' new paint range which, says Hartwig, will add further value to the décor service. "Our decorators will be able to help customers select the best paint colour from our large selection of pantones, after which we'll paint the rooms for them." ■



Wetherlys marketing manager Miems Coetzer with Independent Newspapers sales executive Craig Chame.



Top Billing advertising manager Hayden Fortman shares a glass of champagne with Ellerrine Holdings marketing executive Joseph Gunther and Wetherlys general manager buying Donnee de Villiers at the opening of the new-look 8000m² Kya Sands store.



The face of Wetherlys, Sheryn Kidd drinks champagne with Wetherlys marketing executive Craig Rheeder and Kelli. The store is a shopper's dream with everything the consumer needs to decorate their home.

◀ page 11 | SELBORNE

new line to its Easi Carpet range called Chicago, a more upmarket polypropylene item available in eight different colours, and a hi-twist loop pile carpet suitable for heavy domestic use.

Kretzmer believes that Selborne remains Van Dyck's biggest customer. "Their Manhattan is still a strong seller and

we are doing well with it."

Kretzmer reveals that Selborne is now distributing Berry Flooring products. "With the growing popularity of wood and laminated flooring, it made sense for us to get involved. Our reps are selling these products and for those interested we offer a same day service. We are very pleased with what we have achieved so far and I

have no doubt that that side of the business will continue to grow and become an important contributor to our progress."

Looking ahead, Kretzmer remains powerfully positive. "I certainly believe we will hold our own this coming Christmas period, and we have every reason to believe we can improve on our performance in 2009." ■

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Acer TravelMate

offers ultra-mobility and reliable performance

The new TravelMate 6293 from Acer South Africa is a professional notebook designed to suit the demands of corporate, SMB and SOHO users who require reliable performance on the move.

Featuring the latest Intel Centrino Processor Technology, the TravelMate 6293 is equipped with an Intel Core 2 Duo processor, supporting the Intel 64 architecture, as well as a Mobile Intel GM45 Express Chipset with integrated 3D graphics. The integrated Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 4500MHD with full support for Microsoft DirectX delivers compelling graphics and video experiences.

A wide-aspect 12.1" high brightness WXGA screen gives users a greater viewing area, thus reducing the need to scroll sideways when working with spreadsheets. Weighing only 1.95 kg and with a battery life of four-and-a-half hours, this notebook is sure to be a winner with all.

The TravelMate 6293 boasts up to 4GB of DDR3 1033MHz memory that significantly increases data bandwidth, reduces power consumption and enhances thermal performance.

Ample storage is guaranteed by a spacious hard disk (up to 320GB/ 7200rpm), a multi-in-one card reader

and DVD-Super Multi optical drive that provides more than enough space to store and manage files and folders of any size.

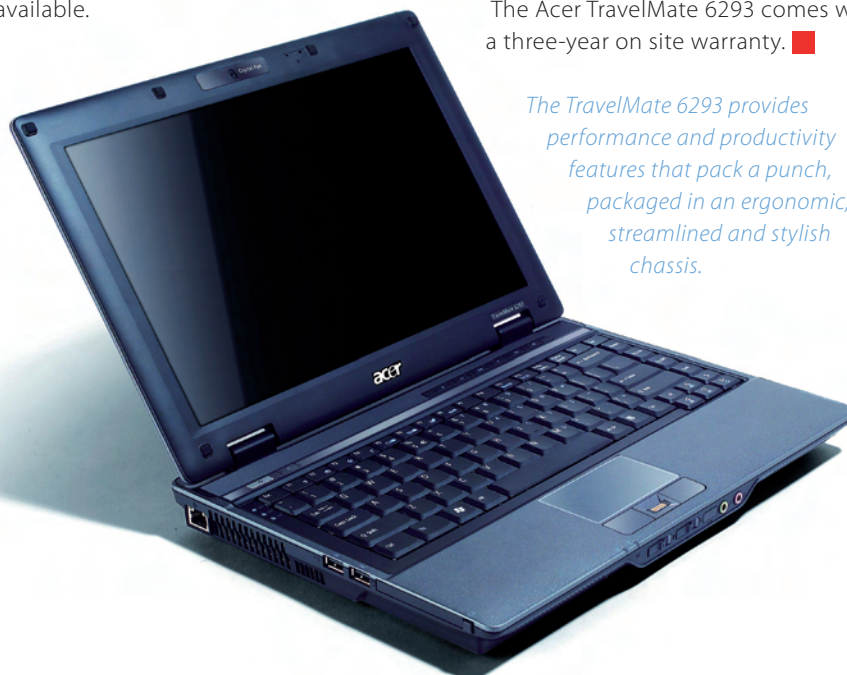
The TravelMate 6293 also offers a complete set of connectivity solutions, from an Intel Wireless WiFi Link 5100/5300 (dual-band quad-mode 802.11a/b/g/ Draft-N) network connection, to Gigabit LAN and modem connections, and in select models, quad-band GSM/GPRS/ EDGE connectivity.

TravelMate 6293 models are also bundled with Acer Video Conference Manager Pack that, together with the integrated Acer CrystalEye camera, make it easy to set up a video conference wherever an Internet connection is available.

The Acer Bio-Protection digital print reading solution, which supports Pre-Boot Authentication (PBA), and Acer FingerLaunch, which offers a secure way to launch programs or authenticated documents with a simple swipe, offer enterprise-level security to ensure that corporate data is kept safe from prying eyes.

The TravelMate 6293 is also protected by Acer's DASP technology, which combines innovative hardware and software solutions to protect the notebook hard disk from hits and falls. Acer DiskAnti-Shock Protection is a special material plate able to absorb hits and insulate the hard disk, helping to prevent disk damage.

The Acer TravelMate 6293 comes with a three-year on site warranty. ■



The TravelMate 6293 provides performance and productivity features that pack a punch, packaged in an ergonomic, streamlined and stylish chassis.

Logitech introduces squeezebox boom all-in-one network music player

Logitech's Squeezebox Boom all-in-one network music player features an integrated amplifier, high-performance speakers and a simplified setup, making it easier than ever before to bring digital music to any room in the home.

"The network music player will be the CD player of the 21st century, and Squeezebox Boom is the first player in its class to deliver high-quality audio in a compact, all-in-one design," says Logitech South Africa sales and marketing manager Romain du Gardier. "From the streamlined setup to the breakthrough acoustics, the Squeezebox Boom is an entirely new type of network music player."

No additional audio gear, wires needed

With the Logitech Squeezebox Boom all-in-one network music player, users can listen to their digital music in the kitchen, bedroom or any other room in your home, without needing to attach external speakers.

"Users simply plug it into a power outlet – there are no additional wires to connect – then, using the existing home network, listen to the music they love from their personal collection on their computer, favourite Internet radio stations, and subscription services such as Rhapsody, Last FM, Slacker, Pandora and Sirius – even when the computer is off," Du Gardier explains.

"Adding Squeezebox Boom to a network is simple. The new player will automatically detect available networks. Select one, enter the password and for added convenience, Squeezebox Boom automatically remembers it for future use."

For different music in another room of the home, users can easily expand their Squeezebox music system by adding

additional players in any room they like or, if they already have an existing stereo system, adding another player from the Squeezebox family to the network music setup, including the Logitech Squeezebox Duet network music system.

To fill the room with sound, the Squeezebox Boom network music player offers an integrated, all-digital 30-watt amplifier accompanied by two ¾-inch, high-definition soft-dome tweeters and two three-inch, high-power, long-throw woofers. A bi-amplified design, which includes a high-performance signal processor, class-D amplifier and digital crossover, delivers crystal clear sound with minimal noise and distortion. For bass lovers, the Squeezebox Boom even includes a subwoofer connection, while the 3.5mm jack lets users plug in headphones to listen to music in private.

The Logitech Squeezebox Boom network music player also works as an alarm clock and can wake anyone up to their favourite tunes. Six preset buttons located under the display make it easy to get to a favourite song, Internet radio station or playlist.

The included remote control gives control of the Squeezebox Boom from across the room and includes a tiny magnet that enables it to be easily attached to the top of the Squeezebox Boom or, for example, the refrigerator.

The Squeezebox family

The new Squeezebox Boom is part of the Squeezebox family of products, which includes the award-winning Logitech Squeezebox Duet network music system, Logitech Squeezebox network music player, and the audiophiles' choice, the Logitech Transporter network music player. ■



Logitech's newest Squeezebox Boom player features high-performance speakers, integrated amplification and simplified setup.

Cobra showers provide ultimate bathroom bliss



Cobra showers are as stylish as they are functional and include a number of different fixtures, from classic, power, rain and pulsating sprays to the more unique showerheads that create tropical, misty shower conditions.

Creating the ultimate bathroom sanctuary is easy with Cobra's extensive collection of top-of-the-range showers, which now also includes the stylish Square Rain shower.

With its strong, angular lines, the Square Rain shower is perfectly on par with current design trends. It complements Cobra's new square sanitaryware, taps and mixers, as well as its wide range of popular square bathroom accessories.

The Square Rain shower is incredibly easy to clean and, like all other Cobra showers, boasts impressive water saving features, including the delivery of constant flow rates irrespective of the water pressure, as well as all brass construction with integral flow regulators and ball joint connectors. Cobra's Square Rain shower is styled to create clear spaces, minimalist styling and exposed shower columns.

The options for Cobra shower columns are endless and include extenders, over-head showers, hand showers, shaving mirrors, soap baskets, mixers and diverters, with many of the shower heads being available in matching pairs of overhead and hand-held combinations.

The distinctive anti-lime feature on all Cobra showers ensures no clogging at the shower head, improving reliability and guaranteeing long-term customer satisfaction. ■

Get the message

with LG's KS360 Chatterbox and Symbian smartphone with GPS

The latest handset from mobile manufacturer LG, the KS360 Chatterbox, offers conversational/threaded SMS, IM, email and access to social networking sites all in one great looking handset.

At a slim 16.8mm thick the KS360 slides easily into a pocket but the slide Qwerty keyboard is ergonomically designed to make it easy for users to write messages quickly and accurately without tiring out their thumbs.

Keeping track of text chats is easy with an impressive 2.4-inch screen, while the smart Touch Screen dialling enables phones calls to be made at a touch of a finger.

Based on consumer insight and in-depth research LG has designed the KS360 with specific consumers in mind. "You cannot create one handset that satisfies the needs of all consumers," says LG Electronics South Africa Michelle marketing director Potgieter. "LG has identified the many different groups of consumers and developed handsets specifically tailored to how those consumers use and want to use their mobiles. In such a competitive market, especially among younger consumers, such an approach is the only way to give consumers the right phone with the right look and features for them.

"We know from what consumers have told us that they want a phone that offers more natural, real-time messaging and that they want to be able to keep in touch with all their contacts from one device. The KS360 offers all this and much more, users will never be left in the dark about what's going on, now that staying in touch and chatting is so easy."

Symbian smartphone with GPS

The LG KT610 is the perfect choice for people who want a phone that combines smartphone capabilities with compact and fashionable styling. The handset is GPS-enabled with downloadable maps for 150 countries.

This stylish candy bar mobile phone is equipped a unique 2.4-inch VGA flip screen holding a PC-like QWERTY keypad. Based on Symbian OS v9.2 and S60 Third Edition Feature Pack 1, LG KT610's users can take full advantage of a rich suite of multimedia features and applications.

With HSDPA connectivity the phone can download at speeds of up to 3.6Mbps and it supports full HTML browsing, just like a web browser on a regular computer. Combined with a Qwerty keypad and push email functionality, socialising, working and web browsing on-the-go is made easy. Symbian OS ensures the benefits of advanced power efficiency and a high-level of OS security, crucial for social and professional users. Video MMS, email and Google package are also available.

"LG's partnership with Symbian is significant as the two endeavour to meet what customers really want with smart phones," says Potgieter. "The KT610 allows you to be in touch through various mediums, regardless of where you are. Its functionally advanced technology makes



The LG KS360 Chatterbox, a funky multicoloured phone with a full slide out Qwerty keyboard, threaded SMS and touch screen dialling, makes it fast, fun and easy to chat and access social network sites.

the KT610 a unique and multifaceted device, ideal for the most demanding businessman or woman. ■



The uniquely designed LG KT610 combines high performance with fashionable styling.

Cellular phones

Smart phone sales boom with

While the South African mobile phone market has so far remained fairly immune to the international financial difficulties, it remains to be seen whether this will continue. Consumers are feeling poorer and with less access to credit have been postponing purchases. Mobiles and smart phones are an exception, however, as both categories are positive.

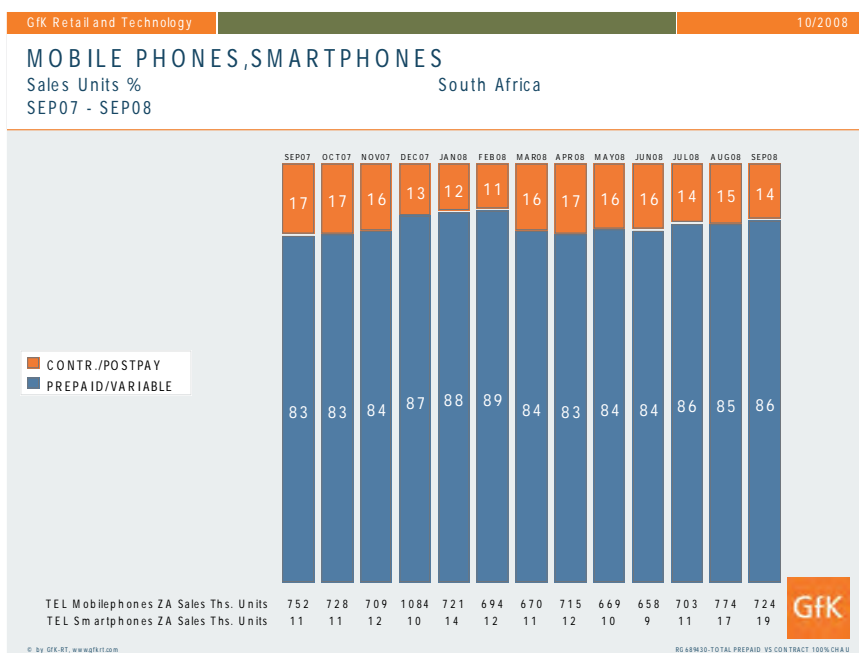
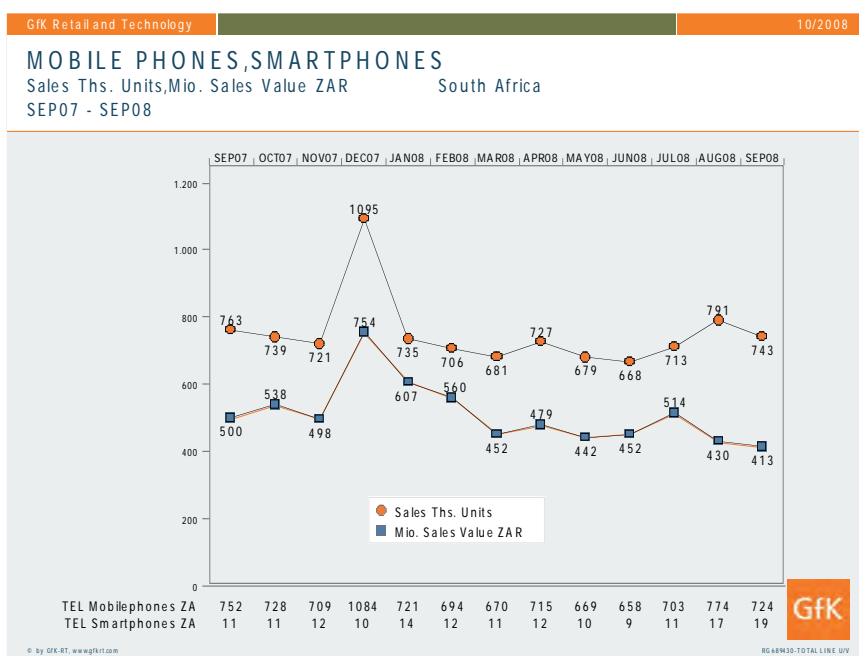
Resource-based emerging economies in particular have been strongly affected by the global economic slowdown. Additionally, emerging market currencies have lost significant value against the euro and US dollar, making imports more expensive. According to the Department of Trade and Industry the South African economy is still growing (albeit at a slower pace than expected) the long-term goal being an average of plus six per cent over the next three years. Moreover, huge public investment programmes in infrastructure (R584 billion) to prepare the country for 2010 will allow it to weather these turbulent times.

Despite an overall sense of restraint across the major South African industries it has to be pointed out that consumer confidence is at a low. The personal sense of wealth is under pressure on account of declining real estate prices and pressure on the rand. Retail sales have suffered across a wide variety of categories, for example, car sales plunged in September by 33

per cent compared to last year (source Naamsa) and similar figures were monitored across almost all plugged appliances on the traditional retail side.

Nevertheless, this year's growth rate for simple mobile phones has been

consistent at plus two per cent to last year in units, and the more expensive and thus better equipped smart phones are booming with double digit growth rates. Taking these growth rates into account a total market size (100 per cent



double digit growth rates

coverage) of 10.7 million units in 2008 (+/- 300 000 units) is expected. This figure includes grey products but excludes refurbished. While estimating the grey market in South Africa is difficult, because importing handsets against the network subsidies only becomes profitable if the importers can procure their products at extremely low prices (usually Dubai) and possibly circumvent specific taxes, it makes it clear that the South African mobile market is a mature one. This assumption is reinforced by comparing it to the user base: the number of network subscribers is estimated at around 45 million, of which two-thirds can be categorised as consistent users. Household penetration oscillates between 94 and 96 per cent.

Taking into account the characteristics of a mature market, where will the future growth come from? Essentially, there are several very different market segments that provide for additional growth potential.

Colour screen

The entry level market – phones sold on the threshold between pure cash and limited credit sales. This market is usually defined by handsets below US\$50. In this price segment, past sales-relevant features like a digital camera, MP3 player, colour display or even FM radio are not widely available yet. This is obviously a price problem. The first attribute that has become a differentiator is the colour screen, already available in phones between US\$30 and 40.

The other features are currently situated above the threshold. If the pricing allows for a closing of the gap it would mean that 50 per cent of the current purchases could move to phones with the above feature, plus it might trigger an exchange wave of users with less advanced phones. Other potential features that may be relevant is the double sim card slot (not

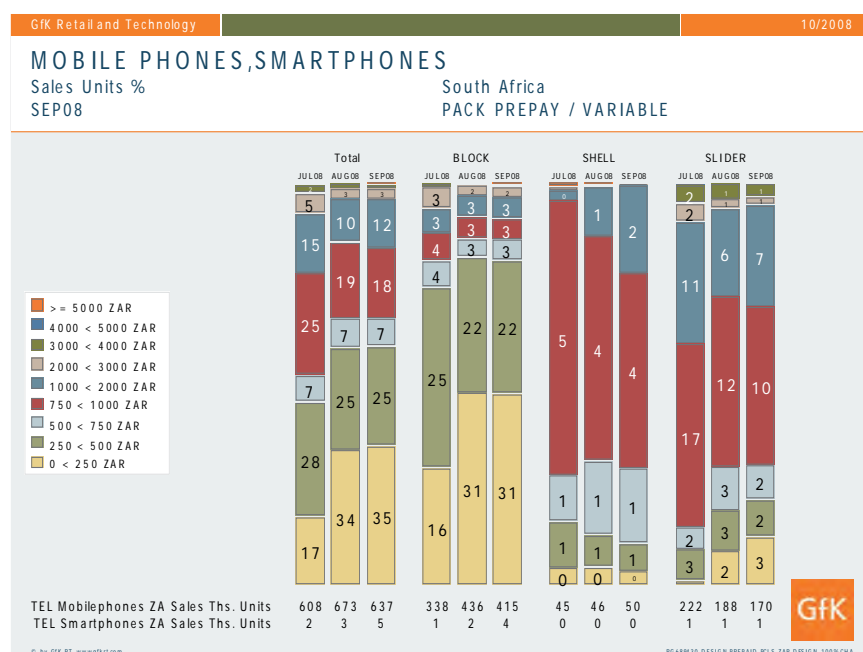
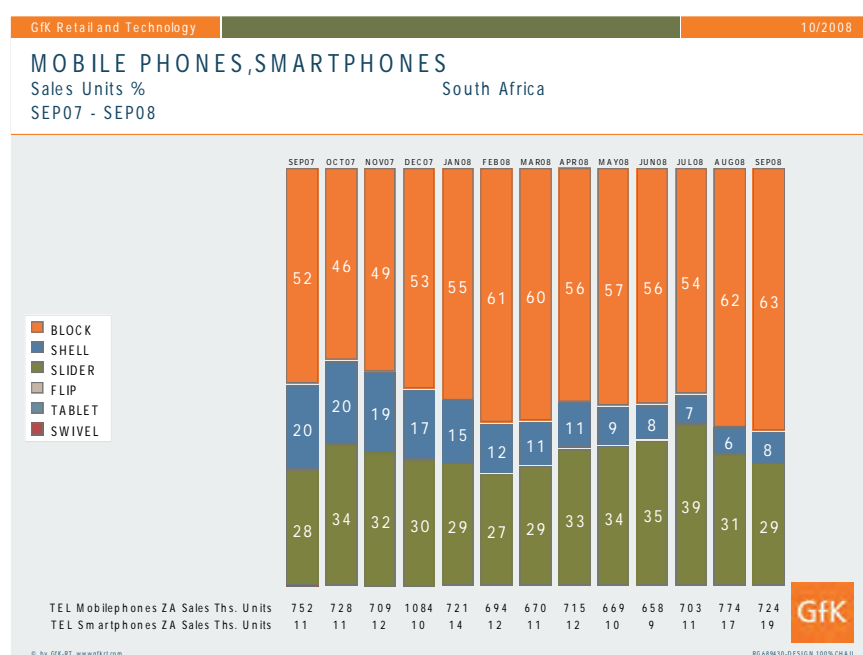
yet available in South Africa), to take advantage of network-specific airtime offers and last, but not least the torch.

GPS and TV

The top end of the market has been

characterised in the past as being feature-driven. These attributes might be dedicated to stand-alone characteristics such as GPS navigation or TV (DVB-H). Both features are at the

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beginning of their life cycle, although but one should not ignore the fact that GPS phones are already currently outselling portable navigation devices. While actual usage is difficult to determine it proves consumer interest in this feature.

The TV feature is not yet active as ICASA has not granted licenses but consumer interest (in particular sports events) can be seen in our neighbouring countries. Other features in the same price band include touch screens, dedicated music phones, Internet, email, memory slots (2GB minimum) and high pixel ranges (5MP). Common among all these features is that the respective products are fairly complex and require sales expertise, thus allowing retailers with a strong service component to excel.

Life cycle

The last variable is the overall life cycle of a phone when it reaches the consumer. Currently this is estimated at 18 to 24 months. Shortening it by either promoting a must-have feature or offering services calculated for shorter time frames might reduce the above mentioned figure.

Despite the current financial woes the mobile market is well prepared for the future with a booming service business and some very useful features just entering the sector. ■



This market review is provided by market research organisation GfK, which tracks the sales of consumer durables through monthly retail audits done on model level. The audit is carried out across all relevant channels of distribution. In South Africa GfK currently tracks and reports on 45 product categories within the consumer electronic, domestic appliances, telecoms, IT, gaming and sports markets.

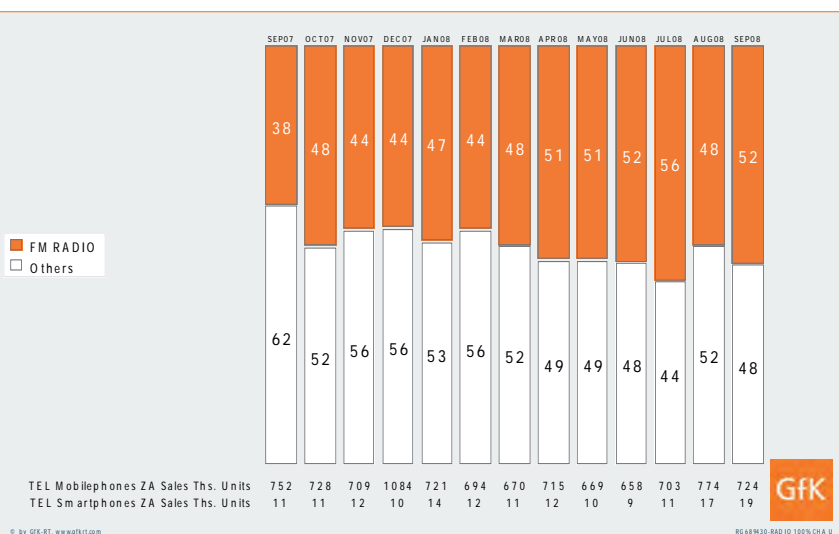
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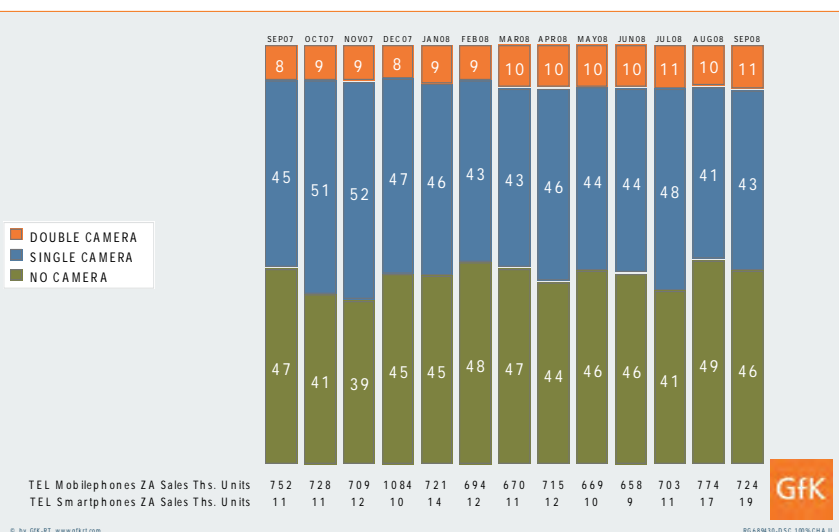
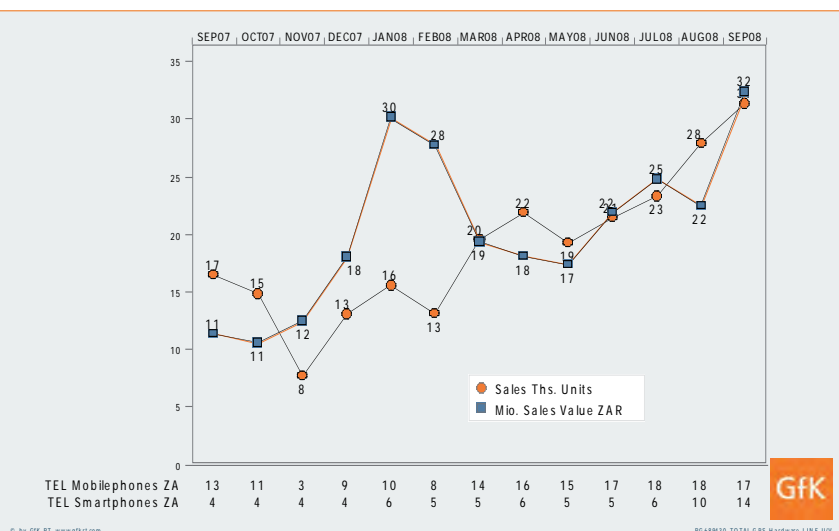
MOBILE PHONES, SMARTPHONES

Sales Units %
SEP07 - SEP08

South Africa

Sales Units %
SEP07 - SEP08

South Africa

Sales Ths. Units, Mio. Sales Value ZAR
SEP07 - SEP08South Africa
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Guests congregate outside on the verandah of Sanyo's new offices.

Sanyo launches new products in style

Around 180 visiting guests from Japan, battery and retail customers, staff and members of the media attended Sanyo's recent launch of its Xacti cameras and Eneloop rechargeable batteries, which was done in spectacular style at the company's new premises in Paulshof, Johannesburg.

The event was hosted by well-known TV presenter and sports personality Neil Andrews and entertainment was provided by all-girl electric string quartet Electro-Muse. Speakers included Takashi Hirao and Noriaki Miyata of Japan, and special guest Fiona Peake, a lecturer at the National School of Photography.

Sanyo South Africa managing director Noriaki Miyata.



Electrical string quartet Electro-Muse provided the entertainment.



Donovan Wadely (Furnex), Victor Marques (P&G Cape Town), Paul Reynolds (P&G Durban) and Mark Telford (Teletek PE).



Anton Gouws (Makro), Yvette Nell (Pick & Pay), Floors van Wyk (Sanyo Free State), Paresh Makan (Kay Makan Durban), Bootie Chotu and Babloo Bhikha (Govan Mani, Durban) and Sylviane Lawrence (Sanyo Durban).



The new-generation rechargeable battery Eneloop was one of the products showcased at the launch.



Shannon Kasner (Audiovision), Japie Greeff (Audiovision) and Johan Burger (Burger Meubels).



TV presenter and sports personality Neil Andrews hosted the event.



Sanyo Electric vice-president and chief regional officer (Middle East, Africa and India) Takashi Hirao addresses the guests.



Guest speaker Fiona Peake, lecturer at the National School of Photography.



The launch was held in the venue room of Sanyo's new premises.

Sinotec treats guests to grand prix of SA motorsport

Team Sinotec Suzuki.

Sinotec recently welcomed XIP (extremely important person) guests to the first Super Bike race of 2008, held at Kyalami.

Breakfast that would have made any king envious, was served from 08h00 to 11h00 and was followed by an exquisite buffet lunch and afternoon "tea" (mostly fine wines and the best whiskey), which consisted of an amazing buffet of snacks.

Highveld 94.7 presenter Bongani Nxumalo provided the live entertainment while top South African DJ Lady Lea ensured there was music until late in the evening.

Around 150 guests proudly wore a Team Sinotec Suzuki golf shirt creating a sea of orange at the track. ■



Sinoprime general manager Kaveen Jimmy (right) with Team Sinotec Suzuki bike rider Robert Portman.



Sinoprime managing director Nelson Lee (left), Hudson Kennaugh and Robert Portman.



Sinotec's sale and marketing staff Avril (left), Stacey and Max.



Popular radio presenter Bongani Nxumalo astride one of the Sinotec Suzuki bikes.



Deepak, Mike and Ismail from Cell C Super Dealer and Furnex.



Mr and Mrs Mike Muller of A&M Warehouse.



Dave Kelly and Glenn du Toit of Ellerines

International floor coverings trade meet at Domotex

Domotex Hanover, the international showcase for the flooring sector is an important indicator of trends and developments in this sector worldwide. When it takes place again at its traditional Hannover venue from 17 to 20 January 2009, it will once more provide the entire industry with an incomparable platform for business.

Organisers Deutsche Messe Hannover expect some 1350 exhibitors on a net display area of 92 500 square metres. Deutsche Messe AG board member Stephan Ph. Kühne says this is very encouraging, despite the current difficulties being experienced by the flooring industry. "Particularly during periods of market weakness and volatility, companies need to seek new business leads, follow new initiatives and improve their image vis-à-vis the competition. There is no better place to

do this than at Domotex. Anyone wanting to do business, or find out about the latest trends and designs, should head for Hannover in January."

The event is solely dedicated to flooring, where national and international market leaders exhibit their latest products and innovations. Numerous special presentations and events, meetings of professional bodies and associations, as well as conferences and seminars create ideal conditions for a direct dialogue between exhibitors and trade visitors, while also offering an additional source of information and expertise.

Currently, the list of ten countries with the largest contingent of exhibitors is topped by Germany, followed by Belgium, Turkey, India, the Netherlands, China, Switzerland, Italy, Egypt and the USA.



Domotex Hanover is the world's biggest trade fair for carpets and floor coverings.

Trade show visitors will appreciate the high quality and diversity of the exhibits in the following display categories:

- Carpets/rugs (hand-made)
- Woven carpets/area rugs (machine-made)
- Textile and resilient floor coverings
- Fibres, yarns and textiles
- Wood and parquet flooring
- Laminated coverings
- Natural stone, ceramic tiles
- Laying skills, cleaning and application technologies

DigitalLife goes big on digital entertainment



There's something for everyone at DigitalLife Expo – from consumers looking to experience and purchase new technology, to exhibitors with their inspired products and services, wanting to be a part of this process.

Rapid advances in digital technology are transforming traditional entertainment, with music, video, TV and gaming platforms merging to deliver radical new entertainment systems: real-time 3D TV, DVDs on iPods and even 4G cell phones. These trends, and the products that facilitate them, will be showcased at DigitalLife Expo 09 from 27-29 March 2009 at the Sandton Convention Centre.

As the only consumer technology outlet offering a complete digital lifestyle experience, DigitalLife Expo 09 will feature products, services, advice and solutions covering the full spectrum of a digital lifestyle. It will also again host its popular and highly successful Digital Home, complete with wireless broadband connectivity and integrated home technologies. Rooms to be featured include a kitchen, study, home theatre, teenagers' chill-out pad, kids' bedroom and garage. For more information visit www.digitallife.co.za

World's biggest textiles fair opens in January



The Heimtextil has been the biggest international trade fair for home and contract textiles for decades. In a highly globalised market which is in a constant state of flux, textile fairs offer the potential to permanently be one step ahead.

Held over four days from 14-17 January 2009 in Frankfurt, Germany, Heimtextil serves as a platform for manufacturers, the trade and designers from all over the world to establish new business contacts, access new areas of business, boost import and export potential and increase awareness of the latest trends.

In global, rapidly changing environments it is crucial for companies to be up to date with the newest developments of the sector. In 2008 Heimtextil offered this opportunity to more than 2800 exhibitors from 65 countries, and the fair was attended by 86 000 international trade visitors. Besides the event in Frankfurt, other fairs are held in Europe and Asia. Heimtextil Russia is now the top event for the Russian home and contract furnishing textiles market and is highly trend-orientated in structure. This is because the booming Russian market is marked by a significant need and high demand for high-grade information on lifestyle and soft furnishings for the home.

Higher exhibitor and visitor numbers reinforce the position of Intertextile Shanghai Home Textiles as China's biggest and most important home textile industry event. Owing to high demand in China, Intertextile Guangzhou Hometextile China will be held for the first time from 18-21 March 2009 at the China Import & Export Fair Pazhou complex in Guangzhou. Heimtextil Japan has not only grown in exhibitor and visitor numbers but also in exhibition space, and is set to be even more informative and inspirational than in previous years. November 2008 sees the launch of an autumn/winter counterpart to the June consumer goods fair, the International Furniture Fair Tokyo (IFFT) / Interior Lifestyle Living. The IFFT is Japan's most important furniture fair and has been staged since 1979. By combining the two fairs, Messe Frankfurt is creating a lifestyle-orientated spring fair and, consequently, a presentation platform for high-end, soft furnishing collections. Market statistics clearly show that furniture production is at its peak in February, so IFFT / Interior Lifestyle Living will set the trends for the new season.

Heimtextil India in Mumbai is an established fair with a firm place in the calendar of events. Texworld India has been taking place in tandem with Heimtextil since 2006, with Techtextil India joining them last October. Heimtextil presents the entire home and household textile product palette under the synonym 'Textile Days India'.

For more information on these fairs visit www.textilefairs.messefrankfurt.com, www.interstoff.com, www.heimtextil.messefrankfurt.com and www.techtextil.com.



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After what has been a difficult and challenging season in the furniture industry, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their loyalty and continued support over the past year.

We wish you a safe and peaceful holiday, along with a happy and prosperous 2009.

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