

<b>PRISA PRISM AWARDS</b>	
<b>Client:</b>	<b>Africa Progress Panel (APP)</b>
<b>Category:</b>	<b>5. Media Relations</b>

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Even though Africa Day (May 25) is noted annually, it seldom provides a strong news angle. That is why Magna Carta (MC) suggested that the Africa Progress Panel (APP), launch its 2010 annual report on the day. Also, because the report was newsworthy and driven by former UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, media interest was ensured on Africa Day.

In a World Cup-dominated news environment, it turned into a positive with Africa already on the news agenda.

After doing an in-depth study of coverage in the FT Europe, media analysis institute, Media Tenor commented: “The APP/Financial Times result exemplifies how African communicators can get it right. It was not just Kofi Annan’s name or the World Cup agenda that worked in Africa’s favour, but the combination of delivering the right type of information to the right place at the right point in time.”

## **THE OPPORTUNITY**

The APP was formed in 2008 to maintain a focus on the commitments to Africa made by the international community promoting Africa’s economic, social and political development.

In 2009, APP conducted a media outreach programme, assisted by MC, to announce its annual report through initial media engagement to set context and a press conference. The press conference in 2009 was held during the World Economic Forum (WEF) and leveraged the media attending WEF in addition to other PR activities which supported the announcement.

In 2010, the APP requested that MC announce its annual report launch by arranging a press conference in Johannesburg. The chosen date, May 25, was the annual Africa Day and in the lead-up to the Soccer World Cup allowing APP to leverage upon this significant day in the African calendar.

A targeted media programme sought to:

- Leverage thought leadership through the findings of the APP annual report
- Facilitate media engagement and positive media coverage
- Position APP as a credible contributor and catalyst to finding socio-economic and political solutions for Africa
- Build understanding of APP, its role and contribution to the continent
- Profile panel members and their contribution/area of specialty
- Utilise the APP online site to create a SMPR to attract the common interest community and disseminate information about the Africa report.

## **RESEARCH**

All these key issues within Africa were leveraged and compared against the report's findings to create a range of strong media angles and interest. This allowed MC to put together a targeted media approach.

Key business players in Africa were to be researched and the CEOs of the companies were to be added to the invite list.

## **PLANNING**

It was determined no other major local events happened on launch day, May 25. It was suggested that the launch be held mid-morning to provide media with enough time before its deadlines.

There was heightened activity in the lead up to the FIFA Soccer World Cup (SWC) with the opening game 17 days away. With this in mind it was important to note that venues, caterers, accommodation, flights would carry a premium fee and had to

be booked immediately. A big enough venue that could accommodate: one main plenary room, four interview rooms, production room and a holding room were needed.

During this time there was also heightened news focus by the media on the Soccer World Cup. However the need to report on socio-economic and business will remained and the media's attendance at the press conference was expected to be substantial. In addition, Mr. Annan's presence was a significant draw-card to senior international and local journalists and it was therefore important that every effort be made to accommodate media interviews.

The programme of the press conference and media bids had to be managed closely to be in line with the panel members' tight schedules. The length of the press conference had to be kept as tight as possible and not exceed one hour with a media Q&A session to allow for journalists to file their stories as soon as possible. Wireless internet access and the SMPR had to be set on the day of the launch.

The most important consideration was to identify key local and international media bids. All of these had to be agreed upfront by work closely with the international PR agency Portland and the client operating out of Zurich, Switzerland.

## **EXECUTION**

Working together with Portland (APP's international communication agency), MC took the messaging of the report and proposed a media map and approach.

With a global media release, a local media angle and only a 40 minute allocation of each panel member's time, MC put together a strategic approach to gaining positive coverage over all international markets. Driving media coverage included contacting key columnists and targeting key news organisations within Africa. Opinion pieces were drafted by a panel member and MC had it placed in key international/ local publications. In 2010, the APP hosted the SMPR on the home site based on the

learnings from 2009. This allowed media from all over the world to access video and written content.

With the World Cup being so close, venues were scarce but MC secured The Venue in Melrose Arch in time for the launch, which could accommodate the brief and all the requirements.

The invitation list included key diplomatic partners, NGOs, CEOs of key African business players, academics and media.

Ahead of the launch an animated viral video was launched on YouTube which posed the question “What type of continent do we want Africa to be?” The video was translated into French too. This was also sent to all invitees and key stakeholders to create interest on the key findings of the 2010 annual report.

## **EVALUATION**

ROI for the SA media coverage was 10:1, total AVE was R1,512,099.00. The positive media coverage and interpretation on each of the key findings of the report within the media drove the key success and the link to Africa Day was strong. The stand-alone launch away from WEF allowed for better, unambiguous interpretation. The event was well attended with a head count of 96 people of which 53 were media.

Individual interviews with panel members were done by CNN, BBC, CNBC Africa, SABC, AFP, The Guardian, City Press, e.tv and Reuters. The SABC TV interview with Kofi Annan flighted 8 times across all channels, making primetime news on Africa Day.

There were two opinion editorial pieces placed in international and local media. The photography and video was captured and put up onto the APP report link on the day of the event; this allowed for successful flow of any visual content captured on the day.

APP's role and contribution within the African continent was clearly highlighted and drove traffic to its website. This reflected a significant interest in the search for APP over the launch period according to the Google analytics report.

Significant increases to online portals referenced the APP and linked back to its home site [www.africaprogresspanel.org](http://www.africaprogresspanel.org). At the start of the campaign there were **7,230 links** to the APP website. After the launch there were **10,900 results**.

Further understanding of the report reflected a positive tone amongst people who commented on the APP on Twitter.

**ENDS**