

PROMOTION

Office automation firm celebrates 10 years

'Through sheer determination we continued to forge a niche'

By NICOLETTE SCROOBY

FUSION Office Automation celebrate 10 years in business this month. The company with its head office in Vincent, East London specialises in the sale, rental and servicing of office automation equipment, like photocopiers, printers and telecom solutions.

Founders Jason Van der Walt and Andrew Gardner were old Selborne College friends who went to Johannesburg to climb the corporate ladder. Their careers mirrored each other's and after eight years of living the rat-race they decided to come back home to their East London roots.

Jason said: "We both saw an opportunity in the office automation market in the Eastern Cape."

"We literally each sold all of our assets in Johannesburg and took a gigantic leap of faith. We started our business in 2006 in Andrew's mother's lounge, basically selling photocopiers out of the boots of our cars."

"In spite of the best efforts of some established players in the market, their attempts to close us down in those early days only fuelled our fire even more. Through sheer dogged determination we continued to forge a niche for ourselves," Jason said.

From those humble beginnings the duo systematically built their business achieving no less than 50 percent growth year-on-year both in terms of the size of their client base and their financial stand-



COMMITTED: Fusion Office Automation staff at their premises in Vincent

Picture: NICOLETTE SCROOBY

ing. "We are now proud to announce that as a group we have an installed customer base of over 4500 clients."

The Directors of Fusion Office Automation are extremely proud of the fact that they have created over 80 jobs in the Eastern Cape – jobs that didn't exist 10

years ago. "We have created jobs, we have created skills – we have played our little part in terms of stimulating the local economy. We want to do more – we want to be positive, contributing local citizens ... we are passionate about the Eastern Cape, its economy and most importantly its people. Along the way we have poured

a lot of money and effort into events, charities and causes – we do these types of things graciously... the Eastern Cape has been good to us, and we want to contribute wherever we can."

The company has also established a franchise model and now boasts Trans-kei, Port Elizabeth and Eastern Cape

franchises. Fusion Office Automation partnered with Ricoh two years ago as an Approved Business Partner in the region. We are proud that this partnership with Ricoh has now been elevated to that of a Premium Business Partner.

"Our partnership with Ricoh has been excellent for us in terms of the support and credibility that partnering with a global brand offers. Likewise for Ricoh, we have unlocked the potential of the Eastern Cape – an area of the country which has not historically been very productive for them is now extremely successful. It's a win-win scenario."

In 2009 Fusion Office Automation won the Daily Dispatch / Standard Bank entrepreneur of the year award.

"We were very proud of the accolade at the time as we were only three years into our businesses journey. They backed a winning horse. Hats off to the Daily Dispatch and Standard Bank for seeing something special in the Fusion story all the way back in 2009," said Jason.

"Most importantly we owe a huge thank you to each and every client who has partnered with us over the years and we are extremely grateful to some of our longstanding clients in particular who saw something special in us 10 years ago and have stuck with us through thick and thin."

"We also want to thank our staff for the journey to date – we have some of the most loyal, hardworking and dedicated people that you could ever wish for in our ranks. My message to both our clients and our staff is that they need to hold on tight – we are extremely well poised in terms of our businesses strategy and our levels of organisation – we intend to make the rest of our journey the best of our journey."

IN BRIEF

Farmer in court for alleged racist posts inciting attacks on FB

LEON Vincent du Plessis, a Bronkhorspruit farmer accused of trying to incite fatal attacks on black people via Facebook posts, is expected back in court today.

The Bronkhorspruit Magistrate's Court will continue hearing his bail application.

Magistrate David Shinkwambane adjourned the application last Thursday, just when Du Plessis and his lawyer started delivering their argument about why he should be granted bail.

A court official confirmed to the Sowetan that Du Plessis will be back in the dock today.

Du Plessis has been in custody since his arrest three weeks ago. His first bail application was postponed because he wanted an Afrikaans-speaking interpreter present.

He was arrested at his farm outside Bronkhorspruit in a raid police conducted following a tip-off about his allegedly inciting, racist posts on Facebook.

Police apparently found firearms and 1 300 rounds of ammunition, including SSG bullets, inside his home.

He faces charges of inciting others to commit crimes, possession of explosives, possession of ammunition without having a licence and failure to lock firearms in a prescribed safe.

In his posts, all in Afrikaans, Du Plessis repeatedly makes racist statements.

On February 1, he posted a picture of a silhouetted man carrying a shotgun, a trail of blood behind him, with the words "die Boere is gatvol" (Afrikaners have had enough).

But when arguing for bail last week he denied he was racist. Du Plessis said he got along well with black people he worked with over the years. — *TMG Digital/Sowetan*

No EC visit for Ramaphosa

"TECHNICAL aircraft difficulties" were given as the reason Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa had to cancel his Human Rights Day appearance in Uitenhage yesterday.

A Presidency statement said Ramaphosa had been "scheduled to address the commemoration service of the 31st anniversary of the Uitenhage massacre in the Eastern Cape".

Meanwhile in Uitenhage, the Economic Freedom Fighters deputy president Floyd Shivambu marked the anniversary of the Uitenhage Langa Massacre at the Allanridge Community Hall. — *TMG-Digital*



CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

Water saving book to be released

TODAY sees the launch of National Water Week and this year's theme is "Water for people, Water by people".

In support of the Department of Water and Sanitation's awareness campaign, the Water Research Commission (WRC) will be launching a booklet entitled *How to Save Water – A Householder's Handbook*.

"A culture of learning and sharing combined with innovation and creativity, integrity and fairness, will make sure that the WRC plays a leading role as a global water knowledge node as South Africa's premier water knowledge hub, a statement said.

The booklet will be distributed in various communities and the launch is scheduled to take place in Diepsloot in Johannesburg. — *TMG-Digital*

CPI pushed up by supply side

DATA due for release tomorrow is likely to show supply side factors having continued to exert price pressures on consumer price inflation in February, according to Investec economist Kamilla Kaplan.

"The CPI inflation update for February should reflect a continuation of supply side factors exerting upside price pressures, yielding a rate of 6.6% year-on-year (y/y) compared to a prior 6.2% y/y.

"In particular, food, petrol and administered prices more broadly, are placing upward pressure on headline CPI. Demand led price pressures are restrained on the persistence of subdued domestic demand conditions," Kaplan said.

She noted that the South African Reserve Bank was projecting significantly higher CPI inflation both this year and next, relative to Investec's own forecasts, as evidenced by the bank's recent forecasts in the March Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) statement.

"Factoring in the SARB's new inflation forecasts and the hawkish policy bent, the repo rate is likely to rise further this year in order to keep real interest rates in positive territory.

"Given that the SARB raised interest rates in March, instead of our forecast of May, we now do not expect a hike in May. However, our previous forecast of a 50 basis points increase in November has been pulled forward to July. There is also now the possibility of an additional 25bp increase occurring in September," Kaplan said. — *TMG-Digital*



KAMILLA KAPLAN

KZN accident claims three lives

THREE people, including a two-year-old boy, died and four people were critically injured during a head-on collision between an SUV and taxi on the M19 between Pinetown and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal early yesterday morning.

ER24 spokesman Werner Vermaak said that when paramedics and emergency personnel arrived at the accident scene shortly after midnight, they found the boy as well as two adults in the SUV had died.

The driver and another boy were found trapped. Vermaak said the driver of the taxi and a female passenger, who is believed to be pregnant, were found with critical injuries still trapped in their vehicle.

It is believed that the taxi driver lost control around a bend on the M19 and veered through the centre median before head-on with the SUV. — *TMG-Digital*

Zuma to co-chair Health indaba

PRECIOUS Matsoso will be President Jacob Zuma's sherpa at the High Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth.

Matsoso, the director-general of the national Department of Health and chairperson of the World Health Organisation's executive board, and international relations minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane will accompany Zuma when he co-chairs the official launch of the commission tomorrow.

The commission "is envisaged to... submit its report to the UN secretary-general" in September.

"A summary of the meeting will be made available to the public through the commission's website <http://www.who.int/hrh/com-heeg/en/>," a Presidency statement said. — *TMG-Digital*

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ESTABLISHED: The Fusion Office Automation building is located at 6 Pine Park in Vincent, East London

Picture: MARK ANDREWS

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10 years of partnership... with many more to come.

Fusion Office Automation have been an important member of the Ricoh family for so long simply because their values and ours are so closely matched. Like Ricoh, Fusion understands that their service to their customers is vital, as it allows their businesses to thrive, knowing they can work on what truly matters to them.

Ricoh is proud to be able to call them a Premium Business Partner, and congratulates them on 10 very successful years of business and partnership. We look forward to many more exciting years together.

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The Directors and Staff of Bax Kaplan Russell would like to congratulate Fusion Office Automation on their 10 Year Anniversary.

We look forward to many years of successful business together.

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