Econet eclipses Coca-Cola to clinch Zimbabwe Superbrand

By Dumisani Ndlela

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Telecommunications group Econet Wireless Zimbabwe eclipsed the Coca-Cola brand to clinch the Superbrand award at a ceremony held Thursday, 2 December 2010. Coca-Cola trailed to second position, with the Spar retail franchise coming third.

Other brands that made it into the top 10 include Castle (fourth), Toyota (fifth), Pilsener (sixth), OMO (seventh), Chibuku (eighth), Lion (ninth) and Cascade (tenth).

Castle, Plisener and Lion are lager beers produced by SAB Miller associate Delta Corporation which also makes opaque beer Chibuku. Coca-Cola is made and distributed by Delta in Zimbabwe, meaning the group's products dominated the Superbrand contest.

OMO is a detergent made in South Africa, while cascade is a cordial made by a local firm. Toyota is a vehicle brand from Japan.

Top brands in each category

Coca-Cola was top of the FMCG category, while Econet topped the ICT brands group. Toyota was top in the motor industry category while *The Herald* newspaper was the top brand in the print media category although it did not feature in the top 10. South Africa's Stanbic Bank was ahead of its competitors in the Banks category while Spar was the leading retail brand.

Other Superbrand categories were finance and insurance won by First Mutual Life; transport and logistics (Pioneer); Agriculture (Seed Co); HR and consultancy (KIPPS); health and medical (MARS); real estate (CB Richard Ellis); and hospitality industry (African Sun).

In his report on behalf of the judges, Tov Manene, MD of Select Research which was contracted to undertake the Superbrand survey, said: "Econet has become a generic name for the cellphone industry in the country. It is a great strength that everyone in the company is proud of."

Measuring brand health

The Superbrand survey 2010 was modelled to provide an indication of marketing and advertising success, brand popularity,

growth, decline and consumer trust. It was also meant to provide business investors and the public with a brand health measurement.

The Zimbabwean Superbrand project is unrelated to Superbrands, the world's largest and leading independent arbiter of branding headquartered in London with operations in over 40 countries.

Gillian Rusike, the secretary general of the Marketers Association of Zimbabwe (MAZ), the custodians of the Zimbabwe project, said they were currently negotiating with Superbrands to become part of the international network.

ABOUT DUMISANI NDLELA

Dumisani Ndlela is a Zimbabwean journalist specialising in business and financial reporting, with experience reporting on commodities, stock and financial markets, advertising, marketing and the media. He has previously reported from a number of regional countries as well as from the UK and Germany on commodities and regional integration. He can be contacted on dndlela@yahoo.co.uk.

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