

Johannesburg

01 October 2014

### **CORPORATE REPUTATION ADDED TO CGF's SERVICES: APPOINTMENT OF ANDREW BARNES**

Andrew Barnes has joined CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd ('CGF') as a Corporate Reputation specialist. As the owner of De Facto, Andrew has a wealth of experience in consumer markets and more recently in corporate business research. While De Facto was primarily a consumer research agency, recently Andrew has steered his attention towards the corporate business sector and it is in this capacity that he now joins CGF.

Through the years, business leaders have increasingly failed to engage sufficiently with those that matter most to their businesses. They are often trapped between running the business and not finding enough time to communicate with their stakeholders. In reality, many leaders at both government and business levels are highly stressed and they do not talk openly and honestly to their customers, suppliers, and other key stakeholders in their respective supply chains. While most will claim to care very much about their stakeholders, in reality many leaders do not always have the additional time to actively engage their stakeholders adequately enough in order to learn about their perceptions, attitudes and motivations. And it is these perceptions, attitudes and motivations that are critical to the on-going effective functioning and sustainability of business.



Andrew Barnes joins CGF to add a new dimension to its corporate governance services

### **WHEN LAST DID YOU HAVE A GOOD CONVERSATION WITH THOSE THAT MATTER MOST TO YOUR BUSINESS?**

Using a conversational approach, Andrew engages business leaders and builds honest, authentic feedback in regard to any subject the shareholders or business leaders feel have the ability to damage the company's brand and or reputation. The *business conversational model* he uses has a theoretical foundation that simply states that a true inquiry can only arise in a dialogue that incorporates a two-way responsive communication. However at a practical level, real productive inquiry can only occur through a process of conversation that recognises merit in both parties -- namely the company and its stakeholder(s) -- and places a store of value on their honest contribution.

Using feedback from Andrew's in-depth *Business Conversations*, he is able to conduct a thorough analysis of the emerging themes and build a cogent response for clients. Often the information arising from these projects is both illuminating as well as surprising; new "news" has this effect! The honesty of the feedback also arises through a commitment to confidentiality of the highest order. All participants are ensured that their contribution, while being used, will not be attributed to them personally. They are free to speak their mind. Expectedly, Andrew has built through the years a formidable reputation based upon his integrity, and his to-the-point, feedback reporting.

Andrew's *Business Conversations* provide a very powerful methodological basis for the discovery of new insights. While the concept of talking to people is not new, it is sadly a skill that many busy

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executives tend to undervalue, especially in the sphere of business leadership. To this extent, when last did you get authentic honest feedback to questions such as:

- *How do customers really feel about your service and / or products?*
- *Are customers planning to migrate?*
- *What relationship do your customers enjoy with your competitors?*
- *What does the marketplace see as your strengths and weaknesses?*
- *How are your customers responding to the product offering of your competitors?*
- *In what areas are your competitors stronger, or developing new competencies?*
- *What do customers think of your management structure and your ability to respond to their needs?*
- *What industry trends do your suppliers see developing?*
- *What do your investors think of your strategic direction?*
- *To what extent do your key stakeholders support your company's executive bonuses and if this information is not made publically available, should it be made available?*
- *What do your investors think of your board performance?*
- *How important is it to produce an annual Integrated Report and does this improve stakeholder value?*

The above questions are just a few examples of the types of issues that *Business Conversations* can address and the impact the answers may have upon corporate performance. Moreover these types of issues are inextricably tied to a company's strategy, its corporate reputation as well as its risk management. As such, these are integral components of the company's *Corporate Governance Framework®*. It is simply good business practice for business leaders to actually know what those most important to their business, think about their business. Equally, it is good business practice to anticipate how your stakeholders might respond to any new initiatives you may be considering.

New information can provide challenges to any business. To assist with the integration of new insights into business planning, Andrew offers to follow through with custom designed strategy/planning workshops. These workshops are geared not only to acquaint the management team with new information, but also to help the team respond proactively through targeted business planning and actions.

With Andrew joining the CGF team, we can confidently offer our clients a valuable service which will enhance their stakeholder relations. And through the market intelligence gained through meaningful dialogue, our clients can significantly improve the company's corporate reputation, and undoubtedly also their overall governance processes and practices.

Should you wish to meet with Andrew to discuss these important services, or any matters pertaining to your general business research requirements, please do not hesitate to contact him on 082 565 2121 or [Andrew@defacto.co.za](mailto:Andrew@defacto.co.za)

**ENDS**

Words: 884

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### **About CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd: Services**

CGF is a Proudly South African, Level 4 B-BBEE compliant company that specialises in conducting desktop research on Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) related topics, amongst other related company secretariat, regulatory and compliance services.

The company has developed numerous products that cover GRC reports designed to create a high-level awareness and understanding of issues impacting a CEO through to all employees of the organisation.

Through CGF's Lead Independent Consultants, our capabilities include the aggregation of local and international best of breed governance reporting services and extend to;

- strategic management consulting, business re-structuring, executive placements, executive coaching, board assessments and evaluation, out-sourced company secretarial functions, facilitation of Corporate Governance Awareness workshops, IT governance through to Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) consulting and Corporate Reputation services. All CGF's services cater for large corporates, small and medium sized businesses and state owned organisations.

To find out more about CGF, its Lead Independent Consultants and Patrons access [www.cgf.co.za](http://www.cgf.co.za) or [www.corporate-governance.co.za](http://www.corporate-governance.co.za)

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