

Miss South Africa Pageant stays beautifully organised with the help of BlackBerry smartphones

Key Benefits:

- Improved communications
- Better coordination
- Instant messaging with BBM
- Live social media updates

BlackBerry Customer Success Story

Sun International is a South Africa-based gaming and leisure company that operates hotels, casinos and resorts in Africa and Chile. It is the license holder of the Miss South Africa Pageant, which is used as a marketing tool to promote Sun International and South Africa.

The Challenge

Sun International has a dedicated Miss South Africa office based at the company's headquarters in the Sandton area of Johannesburg. The three-person team handles all aspects of organising the pageant, from selecting candidates in the different regions of the country to putting on the pageant, which is held annually at one of the Sun International resorts.

Sun International wanted to find a way to improve the communications among the Miss South Africa team members. Because they travel frequently around the country, it was important that the team stay in touch throughout the day. According to Ayanda Mnyakeni, the Pageants & Fashion Events coordinator at Sun International, most of the team's business with partners, such as the event production team, is done by email. A second challenge was messaging. The team members had been using text messages to keep each other updated, but texting wasn't always reliable.

Industry:

Media and Entertainment

Region:

South Africa

Company Size:

Large

Solution:

BlackBerry® smartphones
BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM™)
Facebook® app for BlackBerry
Twitter® app for BlackBerry

Also, social media plays an important role in promoting the event, both before and after the pageant. Through a process of paper judging, potential Miss South Africa contestants are shortlisted and then invited for interviews. The 12 candidates who successfully complete the quarter and semi-final round of interviews attend a series of workshops to help them prepare for the final pageant. Through all the stages, the Miss South Africa team use social media like Facebook® and Twitter® to keep the media and followers up to date on the progress of the candidates. Furthermore, the reigning Miss South Africa uses social media to report on her activities. "It is vital that the information be fresh and relevant, as there's no point sending out a tweet two days later when it's already been covered by the press," explains Mnyakeni.

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Ayanda Mnyakeni, Pageants & Fashion Events Coordinator, Sun International

The Solution

Sun International equipped the Miss South Africa pageant team with BlackBerry® smartphones, as part of a sponsorship agreement with Research In Motion® (RIM®). The new Miss South Africa and her two princesses also received BlackBerry smartphones. They are used primarily for voice, email and instant messaging with BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM™).

Sun International Benefits

The Miss South Africa pageant team has seen a noticeable improvement in communications. “It’s easier to receive our emails on our BlackBerry smartphones rather than on a PC. It means we always know what’s going on,” says Mnyakeni. BBM has helped be a powerful alternative to text messages. “It makes a difference because everything we do needs to be done urgently. Chatting on BBM makes everything much, much easier for us and we don’t have to pay per message, which is the case with SMS,” says Mnyakeni. “Also, with BBM I know when the message has been delivered to the recipient and when they have read the message.”

The team also uses BBM to exchange files among themselves and with partners. If, for example, the team has an issue with the set design of the pageant, it can send a picture to the designers via BBM. “It helps because the people that we are dealing with are based in Johannesburg and we are in Sun City which is about 3 hours drive away.

So we can send pictures via BBM, so people don’t have to drive back and forth.” This has helped save time, reduce travel and streamline communications. The team also uses BBM to keep in touch with Miss South Africa when she is performing official functions or representing South Africa at the Miss World and Miss Universe pageants.

During the pageant, the BlackBerry smartphones with BBM help communications between the different team members. As Mnyakeni explains, “I might be outside waiting for parents and my colleagues might be inside working with the production team. If we need to have a quick chat without disturbing those around us, we just use BBM.”

The BlackBerry smartphones have also become essential social media tools for the team and Miss South Africa. They use the smartphones to post text, photos and videos to the Miss South Africa blog and on Facebook and Twitter. “Quite a lot of press follow us, and they use our updates to report on what we are doing,” explains Mnyakeni. She credits the BlackBerry smartphones with helping keep the news fresh. “Without her BlackBerry, she [Miss South Africa] would have to take pictures with a digital camera and then come back to the office and upload them onto a computer. But now she doesn’t need to come to the office, yet we still know what she’s doing and she’s pretty much live on everything that she does,” says Mnyakeni.

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