

Thorburn soars to higher levels with Tsebo

Since the establishment of Thorburn 14 years ago, the company has gradually developed into a thriving business which is now perfectly poised and positioned for expansion into the African continent. The Thorburn ethos manifested in its uniquely tailored DNA made it attractive for a major acquisition and, in 2015, the Tsebo Solutions Group acquired Thorburn Security Solutions and Thorburn Remote Monitoring.

Thorburn fits like a glove into the Tsebo strategy. "We need our own security services to supplement and complete the range of facility management services we offer," Royce van der Zwan, Tsebo marketing director commented on the acquisition.

Tsebo is an African solutions service provider offering facility management, cleaning, catering, hygiene, energy management, remote camps and procurement services to 22 African and Middle Eastern countries.

Being renowned for its role in B-BBEE, employment equity and in the communities where they operate, Thorburn easily associated with the Tsebo B-BBEE strategy.

In December 2015, the Tsebo subsidiaries achieved a Level 1 BBBEE rating under the Amended Codes of Conduct, as an

integrated entity. The synergies in the approach to B-BBEE between Tsebo and Thorburn are evident in their collective historic achievements.

The Tsebo drive to strengthen its facilities management service offering includes various other acquisitions such as Call Guard Security and Mandela Security.

The integration of these businesses, management expertise, access to untapped security sectors such as gaming security, as well as a dominance in the KwaZulu-Natal and East Coast areas, strengthens Tsebo's ability to provide holistic facilities management solutions. In their own right these two businesses, with between 10 and 14 years experience respectively, have brought a wealth of knowledge to the Thorburn stable.

Thorburn Security Solutions chief executive officer F.C. Smit is quoted as

saying that Thorburn, with new partners Callguard and Mandela Security, is now better positioned to provide a wider range of services over vast geographical areas.

The expansion into Africa, as part of a total African solution, is exciting and will see the Thorburn brand expand exponentially, something which would have been difficult to achieve on a stand-alone endeavour.

The synergies in business approach between the newly-acquired partners (established by David Walstra and Wayne Johnston respectively), coupled with the Tsebo ethos makes integration easier than in traditional acquisitions.

The Thorburn foundation, laid over the past 14 years, will be a valuable cornerstone for new developments in the business.

Thorburn is a proud, well-respected, competitive and innovative role player in the South African security market.

With ongoing analysis of the market, the creation of new and innovative products underpinned by a constant search for innovation, puts Thorburn at the forefront of the market.

The creation of African market opportunities with a Pan-African services provider such as the Tsebo Solutions Group, is enormously exciting.

There will be a strong partnership between Thorburn and Tsebo-owned Allterrain Services (ATS) in Africa, where the demand for manned and electronic security at their facilities is high, and opens up new opportunities to further expand the services to its existing African and Middle East client base.

The recent expansion of crowd facilitation capabilities to include two armoured vehicles is a clear indication of a sound business keeping track with the ever-



increasing risks in the areas where business is conducted.

Community unrest in rural mining areas hampers the effective execution of security services and client activities are constantly disrupted, forcing Thorburn to provide additional protection to clients and staff.

Safety in the workplace has become an important focal point and requires increasing activity and specific focus from security services.

The adoption of the safety leadership concept at Thorburn whereby, firstly ensuring own compliance and thereafter safety enforcement in the work surroundings, resulted in the appointment of a dedicated safety manager.

Legal compliance audits, corrective action and training have become a norm for the Thorburn security operations.

Security personnel, especially in mining security, become targets of larger groups of criminals and attacks on unarmed officers have increased over recent months.

Newly-designed and customised panic alarms in company vehicles, standard panic alarms and solar powered panic systems have been specifically designed by Thorburn technicians to support the Thorburn safety drive for personnel.

Quality measurement is a developing concept at Thorburn. The foundation thereof will always remain the SABS ISO 9001 certification, but additional measures in the form of tailored Service Level Agreements (SLAs) is a growing concept for quality measurement.

It is believed that where SLAs are in place, the quality of service delivery drastically improves and there is an alignment with client quality standards and expectations.

The people element in the company is an important part of Thorburn's success, past and future.

In an industry regarded by many as grudge business and where wages are low, tough working environments and danger looming at every corner, a robust focus on employees is critical. Adding to this, there is a desire to see real development of people. The industry needs a constant supply of newly-developed and empowered leaders.

Exposure to more senior positions and new markets motivates employees in almost the same way as development through formal training.

On the other hand, the industry faces certain challenges. The entry into the market requires more skills such as the English language and computer skills, while supervisory personnel with driving skills are becoming more scarce.



Wayne Johnstone,
managing director of
Thorburn Security Solutions
– Coastal Region



Reggie Griggs, managing
director of Thorburn
Security Solutions –
Southern Region



Dolf Scheepers, managing
director of Thorburn
Security Solutions –
Northern Region

For these deficiencies, Thorburn has the answer in the form of external training institutions. An expansion of the current Tsebo Academy to include security and safety training is looming, and an exciting new phase for the development of Thorburn people. This is just another benefit of being part of the Tsebo Solutions Group.

Within the first year as part of the Tsebo Solutions Group, two managers directly benefit from the Tsebo acquisition.

Thorburn managers Thebogo Mdluli and Thami Landu are currently busy with their year-long Middle Management Development Programme (MMDP) at the Gordon's Institute of Business Science (GIBS) in Johannesburg.

In another major staff development programme, six managers will undergo the prestigious NOSA SAMTRAC training course this year, the world's leading course in occupational risk management in the workplace.

In order to constantly provide the most cost-effective solutions to customers, cost-efficiency is high in the agenda.

Opportunities to introduce cost savings through technology applications or remote monitoring services are constantly explored.

CCTV cameras and the remote monitoring of systems will never completely replace manned guarding, but could facilitate manpower reduction and the placement of higher level guarding in future.

In the latest development, with support from Tsebo, new and innovative time and attendance management systems are being evaluated for future use by Thorburn.

Cleaning and catering services within the Tsebo Group have successfully introduced these systems which have already achieved proven cost efficiencies.

Tsebo, as a responsible business, recognised and thoroughly analysed the security industry before deciding not to alter the Thorburn brand, thereby probably preventing confusion in the industry and among the users of security.

The integration of the established Callguard and Mandela brands into the Thorburn brand was inevitable in order to avoid having more than one brand in the same product line.

This strategy is in line with the trend of consolidation within the private security industry in South Africa and will ease the roll-out of one brand into Africa.

The Thorburn Security Solutions brand (inclusive of the integrated Callguard and Mandela brands) under the auspices of the Tsebo Solutions Group, will see rapid but controlled growth in the Tsebo facilities management business environment.

Other Tsebo subsidiaries will also benefit from the Thorburn brand and support in terms of staff vetting, investigations, risk assessments and security technology, which will be available as an additional service offering to Tsebo companies and clients.

Thorburn chief executive officer F.C. Smit is excited about the future of the business. Growth brings cash, and cash brings opportunities to develop new products, new services and new geographical areas. ■



For more information please contact

David Walstra

National Business Development Director

Tel: +27 (0)11 783 4738

www.thorburn.co.za