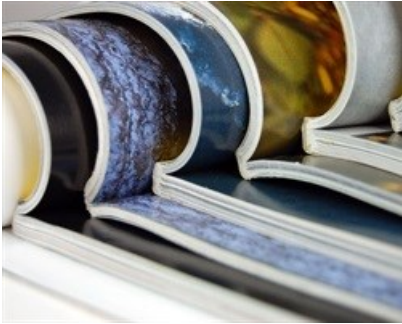


# Independent media agencies 'under pressure to team up'

By [David Furlonger](#)

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Independent media agencies are at a disadvantage in an era of market globalisation and must work together to win business, Rob Smuts, CEO of Johannesburg based RMS Media, said.



[123RF](#)

RMS, which specialises in media buying and planning for corporate and brand clients, is the only African agency among more than 40 invited to join a new consortium of independent agencies from around the world.

Local Planet is headed by Martyn Rattle, former CEO of the global Vizeum media strategy group and chief client officer of Aegis Media.

Marketing globalisation had been a killer for small agencies, Smuts said. International brands seeking communications strategies across multiple countries wanted to deal with one network, not 20 or 30 different agencies.

SA's biggest media agencies - such as OMD, MediaShop, Initiative Media, MediaCom and Aegis - are all part of multinational groups and inherit some clients through their networks.

Local Planet claims to be the world's only privately owned international media agency network.

At its launch two weeks ago, officials said its member agencies boasted combined billings (spending on behalf of clients) of more than 10 billion. Smuts said its combined muscle would attract midsized clients seeking global reach.

Local Planet, he said, had the added advantage of potentially offering different insights in individual markets. "A single, centrally driven network can sometimes lead to a formulaic approach," he said.

"We are all independent, with our own ideas."

Other founding members include the world's largest privately held media services agency, Horizon Media from the US, the UK's 7stars, Spain's Zertem Communication Group, Italy's Media Italia and Germany's Pilot.

Local Planet is the successor to Columbus Media International, an informal network containing some of the same agencies.

*Source: Business Day*

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