

**Merchants in R60m contact centre deal with Australian company.**

*Creates 188 jobs in Cape Town.*

**Johannesburg, South Africa, 22 April 2008** - To continue with its strategy to deliver award-winning customer service capabilities, ASX-listed iiNet, one of Australia's leading Internet Service Providers (ISPs), has commissioned Merchants, Dimension Data's contact centre division, to set up and operate a customer service centre in Cape Town for the next 12 months.

With revenues of A\$240m (R1.5bn) and over 750 employees across Perth, Sydney, Auckland and now, South Africa, Perth-based iiNet supports over half a million dial-up, broadband and telephony subscribers.

The Cape Town centre, based on the third floor of The District on Sir Lowry Road, will be iiNet's fourth operation and will accommodate 144 agent seats, with a total staff complement of 188.

"Using a combination of voice and e-mail technologies, the customer service centre will primarily be used for incoming sales, billing and provisioning, and first-line technical support," says Lisa Roos, business development manager for Merchants SA.

"Plans are to expand this in the near future as well as make use of other technologies such as instant messaging."

The end-to-end solution, which will be delivered in conjunction with Merchants, Internet Solutions and Dimension Data, is expected to go live as early as September 2008. It will, however, begin fielding e-mail enquiries as early as June 2008.

iiNet's decision to plant a customer service centre in South Africa is part of the company's 'follow-the-sun' approach, allowing the company to provide 24-hour customer service from staff operating out of local, agreeable working hours.

"This strategy will see our Australian and New Zealand contact centres transfer customer calls into the Cape Town operation at the end of their day and the start of the conventional work day in South Africa," says iiNet Managing Director, Michael Malone.

"The time difference makes Cape Town the perfect location to service our Australian market during the night-time hours."

Roos believes that international clients like iiNet are choosing to base contact centres in South Africa largely because of the quality of service, high levels of English fluency and neutral accent, as well as its ability to build rapport with customers.

"In a tough economic climate, servicing and retaining existing customers is a priority for most businesses. Companies are looking to South Africa because

we offer competitive costs and long term cost stability; skilled and culturally aligned agents with excellent English language skills; as well as a high quality communications and technology infrastructure,” said Roos.

“Merchants was able to offer a flexible ‘one stop solution’ involving the design and delivery of a custom-built contact centre - from strategy and location planning through to operation and management”, Malone added.

“Customer service is at the centre of all our business strategies, and ensuring consistent results in this area was the critical factor in making the decision to open an operation in South Africa.

“We feel that a ‘follow-the-sun’ approach incorporating South Africa is a viable solution to addressing the contact centre staffing challenges we faced in our home markets,” Malone concluded.

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