

AGRA - THE ROAD AHEAD

A few weeks ago, Agra's senior management held a three day intensive workshop to discuss and decide Agra's future strategy.

First, the external business environment in which Agra operates was discussed,—focusing on the opportunities and threats.

Political and economic factors, socio-cultural, technological and physical factors such as bush encroachment were also taken into consideration.

Ideas and opinions were exchanged regarding Agra's business from an internal point of view. The strengths and weaknesses were identified.

Agra has an excellent branch network with exceptionally good auction facilities. Many dedicated staff members are employed by Agra. Satisfactory financial results were achieved last year and Agra has a good reputation in the business world.

The question was raised whether these positive aspects were used optimally to grow Agra and how to improve on negative external perceptions.

Agra's desirable qualities, for example its good relationship with suppliers and a good track record over more than 25 years in this business, were highlighted.

Some staff members are experts in their field in Namibia and possibilities to optimise their know-how for the benefit of the co-operative were noted.

The profitability of each division of the business was discussed and Agra's current market share determined. Plans and actions to achieve an increment in market share formed part of determining our key objectives.

In terms of the stakeholders (groups that have an interest in Agra) the key players were identified who should be kept satisfied and informed. These stakeholders include clients, employees and suppliers.

Agra's dream of the future:

With all this background in mind, management defined Agra's key choices, which are the focus areas on which Agra needs to focus in order to achieve its vision? "*Agra: my choice-my destination*" (dream of the future) and mission: "*We want to grow our business with a dynamic team, offering a great service experience*" (the way to achieve this dream).

The following 7 strategic thrusts were identified

- **To change or restructure our business** where necessary to keep up with the demands of our customers and the changing business environment
- **To strengthen our core business and optimise growth**
- **To diversify through innovation.** It is a fact that companies that do not identify innovative opportunities to diversify their operations will not be sustainable in the long term.
- **To put people at the heart of our business:** Ensure that we provide our staff with competitive remuneration packages, ensure good communication channels, provide a pleasant work environment, ensure performance measurement and generally treat our people as our most important asset.
- **To entrench a service culture:** Our customers are the reason for our existence. By ensuring that everyone at Agra subscribes and lives up to excellent service standards we will retain existing and attract new customers.

- **To strengthen the Agra brands:** The most valuable intangible asset is the brand of a company. While the Agra brands are already well known, more effort will increase awareness and value.
- **To improve stakeholder relationships:** These include members, customers, suppliers, our Government, service providers and our staff.

Action plans to implement the above strategic goals are currently being prepared by the respective teams.