

Convenient access to cash sparks entrepreneur

YET another entrepreneurial accolade has been awarded to Marc Sternberg, managing director of Spark ATM Systems – South Africa's premier independent ATM deployer – at the 2012 African Access National Business Awards in recognition of his outstanding entrepreneurial ability.

Sternberg's latest award, the Top Performing Entrepreneur of The Year will be added to a host of other awards he has won in the space of one year, including his reigning title as the Sanlam-Business Partners 2011 Overall Entrepreneur of the Year and recently being named the co-winner of the Business Person Entrepreneur Award at the 2012 Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.

The annual African Access National Business Awards, now in its 10th year running, seeks to honour outstanding local businesses for their contribution to the South African economy.

Sternberg adds his name to a prestigious list of businessmen from top companies who competed against each other this year including SAB Limited, McDonald's South Africa, Microsoft SA and Kumba Iron Ore, among others.

Sternberg says he is thrilled to be recognised for his entrepreneurship for the third time.

"I sincerely hope that this acknowledgement serves to inspire the youth of South Africa to foster their entrepreneurial abilities



Marc Sternberg, managing director of Spark ATM Systems.

by identifying opportunities in the market and acting on them.

"To be a good entrepreneur involves a lot of hard work, dedication and passion, but it can pay off in the end through the creation of a sustainable and profitable business that also assists our country though much needed job creation."

Spark ATM Systems, which was founded in 2005, is the country's leading independent ATM deployer with sales and technical operations across South Africa, providing secure and convenient cash withdrawal solutions to consumers in retail, wholesale, hospitality and petroleum locations, among others.

Sternberg recognised the opportunity and need for convenient access to cash in South Africa when he returned from his time spent working in Sydney, Australia. The idea sparked when

he needed to pay with cash and realised there were no nearby cash withdrawal facilities, whereas in Australia convenient ATMs were widespread. Following this, he set out to extensively research the convenience ATM market locally as well as internationally, and as a result Spark ATM Systems was founded.

The company has grown significantly since its inception and now has a national footprint of over 1 700 ATMs and employs over 90 people. Spark has become the supplier of choice to leading chains countrywide due to its superior customer service levels, industry-leading uptime and reliable world-leading ATM hardware, imported from Korea. It offers flexible installation options at a range of price points and installs over 50 new ATMs every month across the country.

Sternberg, who is a qualified chartered accountant, believes that good business is about more than just providing a good product or service, but needs to involve the upliftment of the business's immediate environment. As a result, Sternberg is actively involved in his community and sits on the board of a number of charities and community organisations.

Spark ATM Systems has a holistic corporate social responsibility programme, which is underpinned by a donation to a range of charities for every transaction performed on any of its ATMs. ATM users love this key differentiator to the banks and in this manner, Spark has shared some of the spoils of its growth with many needy institutions across South Africa.