

# Make a name and move ahead

## Competitions can give you a winning edge in business

### WORKPLACE REPORTER

ENTREPRENEURS often struggle to build a credible reputation in a turbulent sea of competition, which often consists of large market players. Local entrepreneurs are often financially limited and unable to utilise traditional promotional tactics and big advertising campaigns.

Through entering competitions, entrepreneurs often overcome these challenges as these platforms are not only cost-effective but, if successful, can have a significant effect on the brand reputation and bottom line of a new company.

This is according to Nimo Naidoo, project manager of the Sanlam/Business Partners Entrepreneur of the Year competition, who believes SA entrepreneurs need to use every available business resource and opportunity.

"In our country's rapidly growing and highly competitive SME market, entrepreneurs are already facing a wide variety of challenges, while having to compete with the big market players. Entrepreneurs also face financial restrictions in attempting to promote their business and diversify themselves in a usually overcrowded market

space," says Naidoo.

"The benefits gained, as a finalist in the Sanlam/Business Partners Entrepreneur of the Year competition, have been absolutely invaluable," says Elian Wiener, the founder and MD of national strategic communications and PR agency Epic Communications, and winner of the Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year 2011 and Innovator of the Year 2011 titles.

"My participation in the competition has been instrumental in fuelling new business growth for Epic Communications. ...we have secured new business worth more than R1 million per year."

Marc Sternberg, MD of independent ATM deployer Spark ATM Systems, says business has improved since winning the 2011 Overall Entrepreneur of the Year award. "The acknowledgement that winning the award gave us has undoubtedly allowed us to accelerate our continued growth path through various new and exciting business opportunities.

"Our growth rate has actually accelerated this year to over 60 percent year-on-year in our core areas of ATM deployment and transaction fee income," says Sternberg.

Naidoo firmly believes industry



**COMPETITIVE:** Marc Sternberg, MD at Spark ATM systems, says winning an entrepreneurs competition was a big boost for his company's reputation.  
PICTURE: MICHAEL PINYANA

awards, such as the Sanlam/Business Partners Entrepreneur of the Year awards, are one of the best ways for entrepreneurs to stand out from their competitors.

The Sanlam/Business Partners Entrepreneur of the Year® competition is widely considered to be the pre-eminent competition of its kind in SA and has served as a spring-

board for past finalists and winners. Besides the chance to win prizes totalling R1 345 000 in value, which includes cash prizes of R200 000, finalists and winners are able to expand their networks and receive invaluable exposure for their businesses.

● Entrepreneurs interested in entering can download entry forms

online at [www.eoy.co.za](http://www.eoy.co.za) as well as interact with fellow entrepreneurs and entrants on the 2012 Sanlam/Business Partners Entrepreneur of the Year® competition social media platforms [https://twitter.com/#!/EOY\\_SA](https://twitter.com/#!/EOY_SA) and <http://www.facebook.com/pages/EOY/330219423683690>.

The closing date is June 16.