

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SUPERFICIAL CSI A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE SHARED VALUE - SAYS CEO OF RCS**

*Shared value approach creates win-win public-private partnerships that build a better South Africa.*

1 August 2019: According to a global study of nearly 30 000 respondents by Accenture Strategy, 62 percent of consumers said they would pay more -or even accept a product of lower quality- should the brand represent ethical values and demonstrate authenticity in all its actions.

Speaking last week (23 July) after the launch of a nationwide grassroots tennis development initiative in Soweto, Regan Adams, CEO of innovative consumer finance business RCS- a subsidiary of BNP Paribas, said that organisations can no longer afford to view corporate social investment (CSI) as a nice to have– but rather a business imperative. “Only sustainable companies -underpinned by responsible business practices- will be in a position to use CSI to gain a competitive advantage in the future,” says Adams.

He says that companies are under increasing scrutiny from both the public and consumers to demonstrate a shared value approach- that is identifying and addressing various social problems that intersect with their business - and create a win-win scenario for all stakeholders. “Corporate social investment can’t begin and end with a company announcing their involvement in a community project and writing out a cheque. Authenticity is important, and half-hearted initiatives that don’t have the support of the corporate mission will do more harm than good. Without a sense of purpose, no company can achieve its full potential,” says Adams.

The RCS Rising Star Tennis initiative – in partnership with global French bank BNP Paribas and Tennis SA- aims to drive inclusivity, youth empowerment and social cohesion using sport. The programme has been introduced in collaboration with Tennis SA (TSA) and has attracted South African tennis star Kevin Anderson as its ambassador.

Adams says that heightened social awareness is also evident when potential recruits assess their employment options. "Robust and authentic CSI programmes are vitally important for attracting and retaining talent. Despite being awarded Top Employer in 2019, it is not

uncommon for potential RCS employees to enquire about our programmes; assessing the sincerity of our CSI commitment to the communities in which we operate,” says Adams.

Speaking on the sponsorship of the Rising Stars initiative with Tennis SA, Adams says tennis was an obvious choice as sport at grass roots level had the most significant potential to unite people and promote social cohesion. “Stable economies are underpinned by stable communities. Rising social inequality – worldwide- is threatening economic growth, which is a problem for business. Despite the profound role of sport in encouraging social and fiscal stability, the economic disparity between premier league and community sports persists, which is a threat to shared goals,” says Adams.

Speaking at the tennis launch, Richard Glover, CEO of Tennis SA said that RCS and their holding company BNP Paribas are exemplary corporate citizens. “One of the things that has impressed me the most about working with RCS and BNP Paribas is the fact that they are totally committed to this partnership. Some sponsors rather say ‘here is the money, put our brand on it and we’ll see you in three years’; with these two companies it’s completely different. They are totally committed; RCS and BNP Paribas are (100%) involved in this project which is what makes this initiative very exciting,” says Glover.

“Sports like tennis enable young South Africans to rise above their circumstances and achieve their full potential,” concludes Adams. “By creating more playing opportunities for young South Africans where they are needed the most, and by taking tennis to the people through this partnership, the initiative exemplifies our philosophy to be positive agents of change. Our involvement in the Rising Stars initiative is about nailing our flag to the mast and demonstrating that we are committed to building a better South Africa.”

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