

THE MAGAZINE WITH INSIGHT

BUSINESSFOCUS

SPECTRUM UTILITY MANAGEMENT BETTER SOLUTIONS FOR SMARTER CITIES



SUM
SPECTRUM UTILITY MANAGEMENT

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION PROVIDER FOR WATER AND ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES, SPECTRUM UTILITY MANAGEMENT IS CREATING SMARTER CITIES ACROSS SOUTHERN AFRICA.

Better Solutions for Smarter Cities

PROJECT MANAGED BY: DECLAN JONES

Proudly South African, Spectrum Utility Management (SUM) is a progressive infrastructure management company transforming communities across the region. Capable of delivering various utilities solutions for local governments, SUM has helped foster the rise of 'Smart Cities' in Southern Africa - pioneering developments designed with the future in mind.

“SUM is leading the way in supporting and improving water and electricity revenue and distribution infrastructure for local governments,” explains Sales & Marketing Director Tshepiso Phosa. “Our extensive knowledge of local government dynamics enables us to innovate solutions to combat theft, vandalism, and nonpayment issues within utility and municipal sectors. Simultaneously, our integrated system efficiently manages both water and electricity, along with a range of dynamic modules in our product lineup.”

SUM has been in operation for over 30 years now, adapting

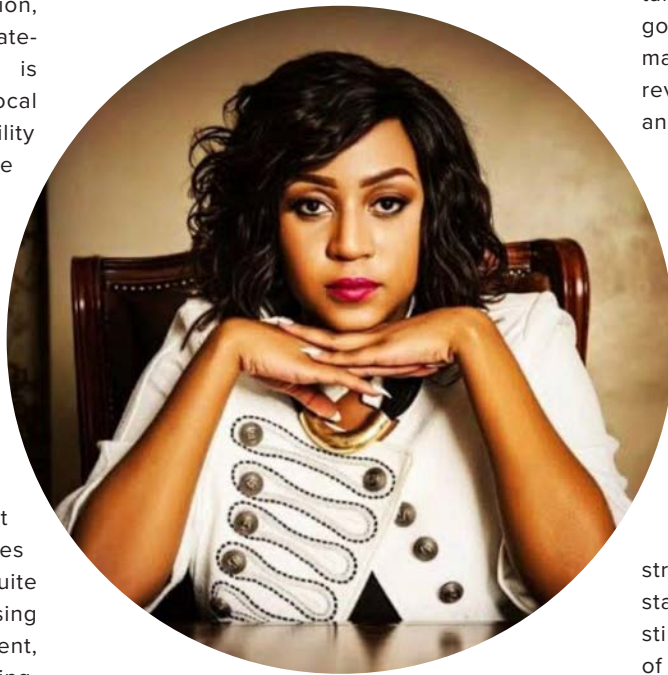
throughout to meet the evolving needs of South Africa and its neighbouring countries. For Tshepiso, it is this experience and proven track record that sets the company apart from its rivals.

“We take real pride in our 30 years of experience developing unique solutions for water and electricity infrastructure challenges, both in developed and developing countries,” she says. “Our unique approach combines private sector investment programs to address typically uninvestable markets, differentiating SUM from any competitors in this space.” >>

PROTECTION, COLLECTION, AND ENHANCEMENT

With a focus on integration, SUM's self-developed, state-of-the-art technology is increasingly popular with local governments thanks to its ability to reduce costs, enhance data integrity management, and increase efficiencies. The key areas of support for the business include Electricity Generation, Smart Funding, Energy Management, Access Control, Water Management, Streetlight Management, and Security.

To optimise its support in these areas, SUM makes use of a comprehensive suite of services encompassing software development, hardware manufacturing,



data mining, and AI solutions. All these services are tailored specifically for local governments and utility markets, with a focus on revenue protection, collection, and enhancement.

In line with the company's commitment to its home nation, all SUM products are funded, designed, developed, and manufactured in South Africa. This practice has helped to ensure quality and reliability in what the company offers, as well as proving popular with local customers.

However, despite SUM's strong reputation and good standing, the company has still encountered a range of obstacles to its growth. According to Tshepiso, these have included a lack of political support, power outages, loss of paying customers due to disconnection from the grid, as well as theft and non-payment.

FINDING SOLUTIONS

In light of these challenges, SUM has been forced to develop solutions that guarantee sustainable supply, track water and electricity usage in real-time, and offer support in the detection of theft and tampering. To do so, the company has established strong connections with a range of stakeholders, enhanced its internal capabilities, and continues to develop new, problem-solving IP and products.

"It's been important for us to overcome these challenges," Tshepiso affirms. "Finding solutions has ensured that we are protecting the revenue of our municipalities/utilities and safeguarding the wellbeing of local people.

"One noteworthy recent achievement has been our exclusive agreement with Eswatini Electrical Company for a cutting-edge steam technology, Baseload," she adds. "This technology seamlessly integrates with our current distribution infrastructure and enables clients to transition off the grid and at a highly competitive price.

"The technology also occupies just 14 hectares, requires only 1,000 litres of distilled water per month, and boasts a 40-year lifespan. It will ensure stable electricity supply and aid business productivity, while dramatically cutting energy costs."

SUM's determination to provide low costs and quality service to the people it serves is just one way in which the company lives out its responsibility to local communities. Throughout her career, Tshepiso has been a believer in the power of businesses to positively transform the lives of others, and the Sales Director has continued to put that notion into practice at SUM.

While the company takes part in a wide array of community support initiatives, SUM has recently engaged in activities including the sponsorship of South Africa's New Jerusalem Children's Home. The company donated R30,000 in total to support the home's ongoing needs, and to help improve the lives of its children. In 2024, SUM also assisted with the children's home's utility bills, as well as contributing to sustainability programs onsite.

After visiting New Jerusalem Children's Home in 2024, Tshepiso talked about the importance of putting children first. "They are the future leaders of our country," she said. "They have the right to education, access to information, and to be cared for, regardless of their circumstances."



SUM's belief in the importance of people is not just displayed externally, but internally too. With the help of an exhaustive recruitment system, the company has built a skilled and reliable workforce that aligns with its values. Once employees are onboard, SUM works hard to help them feel valued and encourages their development.

"To employ the best staff, it's important to have a thorough recruitment process that includes clear job descriptions, targeted advertising, and a rigorous interview process," Tshepiso remarks. "Additionally, conducting background checks and contacting references can help ensure the quality of candidates.

"We bring in great people at SUM, so it's important that we invest in them. Investing in your staff takes many forms, such as offering training and development opportunities, providing competitive salaries and benefits, generating a positive work environment, and creating pathways for advancement within the company.

"Finally, it's also important to listen to your employees' feedback and provide them with the resources they need to excel in their roles. Regular performance evaluations and recognition programs further support these efforts."

BLAZING A TRAIL

In the years ahead, SUM is prepared to blaze a trail in much the same way as it has done over the last three decades. Guiding the company's vision is the latest version of a five-point plan known as SITAP – Spectrum Utility Management Municipal/Utility Turn Around Program.

"SITAP will encourage substantial private sector investment into public sector electricity and water infrastructures," Tshepiso reveals. "As a result, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) will have the best chance to thrive.

"The key points of SITAP are: to reduce technical and non-technical distribution losses; to convert all customers to pre-paid systems; to transform the current distribution grid into an intelligent smart grid; to construct an electricity generation plant to safeguard the smart distribution grid against load shedding; and to establish a carrier-grade connectivity network.

"This program will significantly enhance the competitiveness of energy and water tariff costs in the SADC region, aligning them with international standards. The alignment will also attract sustainable foreign direct investment, leading to the development of a robust economy in the region."



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