

Korbitec appoints another internet heavy weight

Internet guru David Gibbons has returned to South Africa to lead Business Development for the Property24.com and Korbitec brands. He believes exciting times are ahead in the local online sector...

Cape Town born Gibbons takes up the position of General Manager of Business Development for Property24.com and Korbitec. South Africa's leading property portal, Property24.com recently merged with business software development company, Korbitec.

Gibbons' arrival follows the announcement that JP Farinha - current CEO of 24.com - will join Korbitec to head up Property24.com in December 2010.

"We're very serious about growing the industry leading property platform and portal," says Dawie Verryne, Korbitec CEO. "To do that successfully we need the best experience in the global economy. JP and David certainly fall into that category, and we're delighted to have them on board." Gibbons is a global marketing and social media leader whose career took off in the USA with Amazon.com. Initially managing Enterprise Integration (ensuring the integrity of information moving between various organisations in the Amazon network) Gibbons moved on to manage Amazon's international call centres.

But it was with revolutionary American property portal, Zillow.com, that Gibbons really made his name, spearheading social media marketing and also managing the company's business development. Zillow famously enabled American home owners to access a 'Zestimate' on their homes – a move which saw the brand become a household name across America.

Since August 2010, over 77 million homes have been viewed on Zillow – roughly 75% of all homes in the USA. More than 21 million home loan quotes have been submitted since Zillow's Mortgage Market Place launched in April 2008, and the Zillow Mobile Application has been downloaded more than 2 million times. Tasked with explaining to industry and public the details of 'Zestimate' values, Gibbons' reputation quickly developed as 'the face of Zillow'.

"Korbitec's business has grown significantly on top of established lines, and the Property24.com merge creates a strong consumer focus," says Gibbons. "I come from the consumer realm, so I hope I can add a lot of impetus to the company's growth. It's an especially exciting job given the nascent state of the Internet in South Africa."

Gibbons highlights bandwidth accessibility and mobile Internet access as the two factors likely to define the country's future digital trajectory.

"With new undersea cables coming online regularly, uncapped access to the Internet is steadily becoming a reality for the average consumer and is driving major online behaviour change. And then there's mobile access, which in South Africa is also a big force to consider," he says.

"It's interesting to observe that while basic Internet usage in South Africa still lags behind places like the USA and Europe, the man on the street is adopting social media as rapidly. In South Africa, Facebook and Mxit are connecting people at a rapid pace, and it looks possible that South Africa will leapfrog right over the blog phenomenon straight to extensive social networks.

David was headhunted for Korbitec by The Corporate Hub.