

FASA turns to real estate for next chairman

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The Franchise Association of SA has named Jan Davel, MD of estate agency group RealNet, as its chairman designate to take office in 2012.

This is the first time in the 33-year history of FASA that anyone from a real estate franchising group has been elected to head the organisation's executive – and it underlines the wide spread of franchising now beyond the food and fast-food sectors.

"It is also," says Davel, "a great opportunity for RealNet to show our support for FASA, which is a member of the World Franchising Council and the pioneer of franchising excellence in this country.

"In addition, I intend to spend much of my term in office promoting the basic concept of franchising around the country, because of its great potential to create many of the sustainable jobs we so desperately need."

Indeed, according to FASA, the sector created more than 28 000 new jobs in the 24 months to end-February 2010, at which stage it employed more than 478 000 people in total.

Bendeta Gordon, co-founder of industry monitor Franchise Directions, says there are currently more than 29 000 businesses operating under 551 different franchise systems in SA, and that one of the main advantages of such businesses is their ability to withstand tough economic conditions.

"Many franchisors adapted their systems and business models to meet the uncertainty of the markets during the recession with impressive results," she says, "while consumers, pressed for disposable income, looked for reliability in brands they knew, many of which were to be found in the franchise sector."

Quoted in the SA Franchise Warehouse magazine, she also says that franchising facilitates the development of entrepreneurs as franchisors transfer key operational and management skills to franchisees – and that, considering the unemployment levels and socio-economic needs of SA, "franchisors should be regarded as captains of business".

Davel says other key aims during his term will be the promotion of the franchising Code of Ethics and building closer relationships with organisations similar to FASA in other countries to ensure wider and better networking opportunities for members.

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