

Less is more: Ackermans saves watts and wins first prize

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Retail giant Ackermans, wins first prize in the Commercial Award category at 2014 Eskom eta Awards.

Retail giant Ackermans, is proud to announce that it has won its first eta Award for the Commercial Award category at the 2014 awards ceremony held on November 28th at the University of Johannesburg.



In its 25 years of existence, the eta Awards, sponsored by Eskom, have been awarding industrial and commercial companies that demonstrate innovative and energy efficient solutions. In recent years however, the awards have also celebrated innovation and new-age engineering solutions from individuals, groups, and partnerships; as well as successful projects on energy efficiency and awareness in households.

Ackermans won first prize for Project SWATT - an extensive energy saving initiative conceptualised by the retailer, and developed and implemented by UGU Engineering Solutions. SWATT is an abbreviation for 'Save Watts' and the main objective of the project was to reduce the energy footprint of the business and achieve the highest possible return on investment through reducing electricity costs.

SWATT is an initiative comprised of three main components - technology assessment, control mechanisms, and behaviour change relating to energy use - and each component has specific implementation plans to reach the results needed to sustain the project's long-term objectives.

This included design optimisation, accurate measurement of energy use, and an internal communications campaign led by Ackermans' management team to inform, teach, incentivise and reward employee participation in the initiative.

The internal communication campaign was promoted on Ackermans-owned media: from stickers and cartoons, to the retailer's radio and magazine platforms and it also highlighted the cost of uneconomical habits when it comes to energy usage.

With this multi-pronged approach, Ackermans and UGU Engineering Solutions reduced the retailer's electricity consumption by 14 million kWh per year - resulting into a 42% saving per annum on energy costs.

As winner of the commercial category, Ackermans has donated its R30,000 prize money equally amongst the finalists in the community category of the 2014 Eskom eta Awards. They are:

- Tongaview Primary School for their energy efficient and smoke-free kitchen project for rural schools;
- TSiBA Education for the energy efficiency project at the Eden Campus in Karatara; and
- South African Clean Energy for their photovoltaic solar lighting system and solar geyser system rolled out in Mount Ayliff and Mount Frere in the Eastern Cape.

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Ackermans' success story began in 1916 when Gus Ackerman opened the very first store in Wynberg, Cape Town, setting a benchmark for competitive prices that few could match. Today, with more than 380 outlets in Southern Africa, including Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, the business continues to go from strength to strength. Ackermans' proud heritage was built by focusing on the things that matter most to our customers; namely affordability, fashion and durability.

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