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STW fast-tracks field marketing growth plans, announces joint venture with major international player

Sydney, July 5, 2010: STW Communications Group, Australia's leading marketing content and communications services group, today announced the next step in its aggressive push into field marketing.

Following its acquisition last month of Australian-based Quality National Team (QNT), STW has now formed a joint venture with international field marketing leaders, Smollan Group.

The joint venture will see all STW field marketing, mystery shopping and customer auditing activities in Australia and New Zealand – both existing and those acquired in the future - undertaken in partnership with Smollan.

Smollan Group - in which London-based WPP Group has a 33% interest - is one of the largest field marketing businesses globally. Founded in 1931, Smollan has more than 18,000 employees operating in South Africa, China, India, Malaysia, and the UK.

STW Group CEO Michael Connaghan said the STW/Smollan joint venture was a perfect combination of skill sets to fast-track growth: "Smollan Group has an outstanding pedigree in field marketing that puts the company at the top of its game in markets across the world. Combined with our relationships and influence across the Australian and New Zealand markets, the joint venture will be able to quickly leverage growth opportunities and deliver a unique capability to clients," he said.

"We already have a strong position established in creative ideation with businesses like Evocatif, ICRE8, Punch and OgilvyAction, and a market leading position in mystery shopping and auditing through HOED and CBS. Investing further in pure field marketing through this joint venture is a strategic and natural step to further leverage our offering and fast-track growth."

Smollan Group Chairman, Doug Smollan, said Smollan Group was excited at the prospect of entering a new market teamed with the established services and client list that STW could offer.

"We feel a strong cultural fit with STW, and see Australia and New Zealand as markets with big growth opportunity. Our experience and intellectual capital in people and technology solutions, combined with STW's local relationships, provide enormous leverage. We're looking forward to being part of that," Mr Smollan said.

Mr Connaghan said the STW/Smollan joint venture was currently examining a range of other field marketing related STW existing capabilities and new ventures that could potentially form part of the joint venture.

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