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Virgin Mobile and the Branson School of Entrepreneurship team up for Soweto

- Sir Richard Branson awards prize to winning Soweto entrepreneurs

Virgin founder Sir Richard Branson yesterday announced the winner of Virgin Mobile's Soweto Business Plan competition. One of the most well known entrepreneurs himself, Sir Richard presented a R100 000 cheque to Mr Musa Maphongwane & Mr Amos Mtsolongo, founders of Gaming Zone: a business that will bring the chance to play Playstation, Nintendo and more, to the youth of Soweto.

Entries for the competition opened in October 2007 to coincide with the launch of the Virgin Mobile flagship store in the newly-built Maponya Mall: "It's a natural way for Virgin Mobile to celebrate our first store in Soweto and underline our passion to support entrepreneurship in day-to-day business and social investment programmes," said Peter Boyd, CEO of Virgin Mobile South Africa.

The selection and judging process was managed by the Branson School of Entrepreneurship. "The quality of the entries was very impressive. Of the 52 entrants received, almost all were complete well-thought-through business plans and many had already registered as CC or (Pty) Ltd," said Mr James Wanjohi, Head of Branson School of Entrepreneurship.

Sir Richard summed up the spirit with his closing comment of the day: "Being an entrepreneur is not only about making money - you can also tackle social problems with an entrepreneurial mind. I believe that increasing entrepreneurship in this country is the golden highway to economic freedom, plus it's an exciting and fun way to make a living,"

Musa and Amos won a complete package to help start their business in addition to the R100 000 cash injection by Virgin Mobile:

- Mentorship and training by the Branson School of Entrepreneurship
- Legal services such as copyright, Intellectual property related aspects of E-commerce and information technology law by Adams & Adams Attorneys
- Brand design and creative work by Grid Design
- State-of-the-art NOKIA mobile handsets (the E90 & E61 business phones) with a Virgin Mobile monthly airtime allowance

The 9 runners up will also receive the mentorship and training from Branson School of Entrepreneurship and Virgin Mobile access packs & monthly airtime allowances.

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For more info, contact

Nicholas Maweni

Virgin Mobile : Head of Corporate Affairs

Direct line: +27(0) 11 676 5556 mobile: +27 (0) 741 629364 (0741 MAWENI)

Email: nicholas.maweni@virginmobile.co.za



About the Branson School of Entrepreneurship:

Branson School of Entrepreneurship is one of the Schools of Excellence at CIDA City Campus, the South Africa's first virtually free tertiary institution, providing specialised accredited business administration degrees to disadvantaged students. This is for the first time anywhere in the world that the founder of Virgin, Sir Richard Branson has lent his name to an educational institution.

The Branson School of Entrepreneurship is a collaboration between the CIDA and the Virgin Group; the two organisations with immense entrepreneurial flair and passion for creative solutions to business challenges.

The Branson School of Entrepreneurship focuses on encouraging entrepreneurship, creating jobs and developing untapped human potential so that people can transform themselves, their communities and their country through education, a positive attitude and an entrepreneurial spirit.

The Virgin Group brings to the table global experience in diverse business creation as well as networks and training through its business operations in South Africa. Virgin companies like Virgin Mobile, Virgin Money, Virgin Active, Virgin Cosmetics and Virgin Atlantic will take on interns and give training to students through its staff, who will offer guest lectures and mentoring.