

Short Biography of Mrs. Irene Charnley

Irene Charnley is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of a start-up operation, Smile Communications, a low -cost telecommunications operator intending to provide affordable communications to the "Bottom of the Pyramid" consumers, across Africa and the Middle East.

Prior to Smile Communications, Irene held the position of Executive Vice President at the MTN Group.

At MTN, she was instrumental in negotiating and acquiring the 2nd GSM license in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in securing one in four GSM licenses in Nigeria. She also successfully negotiated and concluded acquisitions of operation in Cote d'Ivoire, Congo Brazzaville and Zambia. In addition, she identified other value enhancing acquisition opportunities including Investcom, a company with operations in 10 countries, primarily in the MENA region.

Irene also spearheaded several strategic MTN Group initiatives such as MTN Banking, a 50% joint venture with a national bank. She was instrumental in negotiating and securing financing for an 18.8% management buy-in into the MTN Group, representing one of the largest black empowerment deals at the time.

Prior to MTN Irene was an Executive director of Johnnic Holdings, an industrial conglomerate. Irene was responsible for the strategy which ultimately lead Johnnic Holdings to becoming a focused media, entertainment and telecommunications business.

She also negotiated a series of acquisitions and asset swaps which resulted in Johnnic acquiring M-Cell (now MTN Group Limited).

She achieved a full listing of MTN Holdings through M-Cell Limited and played a leading role in its transformation into one of the preeminent black empowered companies on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange through chairing M-Cell Board and the respective HR and Remuneration Committees.

Irene achieved the successful closure for the Ikageng share scheme in Johnnic, a first-time share ownership scheme for disadvantage South African individuals, which provided approximately 32,000 small shareholders with returns of over 400% within a three year time frame.

Prior to Irene's successful business career, she was a key negotiator in the largest trade union in South Africa, the National Union of Mineworkers.