

THE EXHIBITION PLANNER

Your essential guide to successful exhibitions

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event | conference | exhibition | activation



Sustainable strategies for greening exhibitions

BIG INTERVIEW LEADING THE PACK BEST PRACTICE

CRAFTING CONNECTIONS:
An Exclusive Interview
with Presley Mokotedi



ELEVATING THE
EXHIBITION
EXPERIENCE

Paving the
path towards
sustainability





NOT JUST
CREW
I'M HERE TO
CREATE ART

We don't merely create events; we craft legendary narratives. We don't just manage brands; we ignite unforgettable experiences for your guests.

**There are three responses to a piece of design - yes, no and WOW!
WOW is the one to aim for.**

Milton Glaser

chat^or

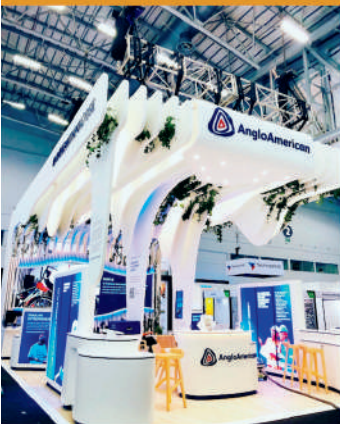
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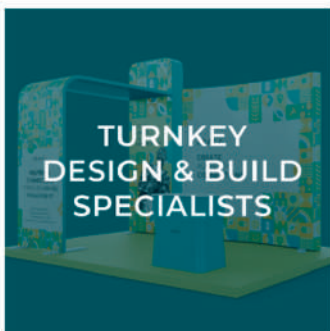
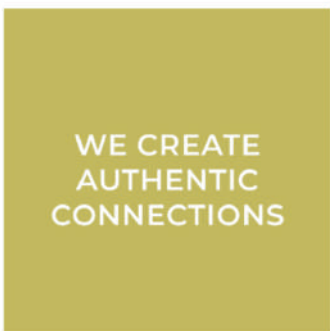


The Chat'r Xperience journey began in 2013 with a vision to establish a 100% independent, proudly South African studio specialising in integrated experiential communication services. Chat'r was founded on the principle of offering clients bespoke and authentically curated event and exhibition solutions for their brands, products or services.

Committed to ensuring that every project executed creates increased exposure or "chatter" for our clients through unique and authentic solutions, the brief to the team for every project is to ensure there is always an element that stands out from the norm. This guarantees our clients receive added unpaid organic sharing and exposure on social media. After all, our name reflects our mission: creating conversations through authentic connections.

Chat'r provides a comprehensive range of services, including event management, professional conference organisation, brand activations, exhibition design and build, exhibition management, venue sourcing, virtual events and exhibitions, promotional gifting, and print, branding, and signage design, production, and installation.





At Chat'r, our approach to stand design ensures that every creation meets clients' unique needs and stands out at exhibitions. All designs are unique and different from the norm, with a commitment to authentic creative interpretation. We aim for our clients to stand out from the clutter in an exhibition hall, adding distinctive elements to our designs. This approach ensures they receive organic sharing, chatter and exposure on social media, creating work worth sharing and remembering.

Our commitment to sustainability is a fundamental part of our ethos. It's not just a buzzword; it's a promise to our environment and clients. We integrate environmentally conscious solutions into all our work, ensuring that our events and exhibitions make a positive green and economically sustainable contribution to the industry.

This commitment is evident in our adherence to the 4R's of sustainable design: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover. We use materials such as engineered eco-fibreboard made from recycled cardboard, reusable aluminium extrusions for support, reusable printed fabric, and LED lighting. We also encourage clients to move away from printed marketing materials and adopt digital solutions to reduce waste.





Sustainability is crucial to Chat'r because the future of our planet and future generations is at stake. We firmly believe in the principle that even small individual actions can make a significant difference. This belief is encapsulated in the story of the boy and the starfish, which serves as a powerful reminder that every small effort counts. At Chat'r, we strive to make a positive impact through every project, no matter how small it may seem.

Clients who choose Chat'r for their sustainable event-planning needs benefit from our deep commitment to environmental and economic sustainability. We are well-informed and educated in sustainable event and exhibition solutions and practices. As active members of the Event Greening Forum, and with our CEO John Arvanitakis serving as Chairman, we are dedicated to advancing sustainable practices within the industry. We are also signatories to the international Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative, aiming to achieve a net zero carbon footprint by 2050.

One of our success stories is the award-winning green event held in Lephalale, Limpopo, for over 1 000 guests. This event, run completely off the grid, utilised 70% local suppliers, sourced seasonal food from local farmers, eliminated plastic bottles, and produced branding and signage from eco-fibreboard. The event had a significant positive impact on the local community and received recognition for its sustainable practices.

Looking ahead, Chat'r's goal is to achieve a 50% reduction in our carbon footprint by 2030, working towards a net zero carbon footprint by 2050. Our strategy involves continuing our current practices, educating our clients, and promoting sustainable event solutions. Our CEO, John Arvanitakis, is committed to driving this vision through his platform as Chairman of the Event Greening Forum, engaging with the broader industry and stakeholders through workshops, conferences, and other platforms.



Our award-winning brand engagements are designed to forge lasting connections with customers, facilitating meaningful interactions that resonate.



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NAVIGATING A NEW ERA OF EXHIBITIONS

We are thrilled to present the 2024 edition of The Exhibition Planner. This issue is particularly special as it marks our first publication since the pandemic. We are excited to bring you this comprehensive guide, packed with insights and strategies to help you navigate the evolving landscape of the exhibitions space.

MUST-READ FEATURES

Sustainable exhibition practices

Sustainability is no longer just a buzzword; it's a critical component of modern event-planning. This feature explores how exhibitions can reduce their environmental footprint, with practical tips and inspiring case studies from industry leaders who are making a difference. Learn how to incorporate green practices into your events, from reducing waste to enhancing energy efficiency.

Leveraging technology for engagement

In today's digital age, technology plays a pivotal role in creating engaging and interactive exhibition experiences. This article delves into the latest tech trends shaping the industry, including virtual and augmented reality, AI-driven attendee analytics, and innovative mobile apps. Discover how to harness these tools to boost attendee engagement, streamline operations, and deliver a memorable event experience.

Trends in exhibition design

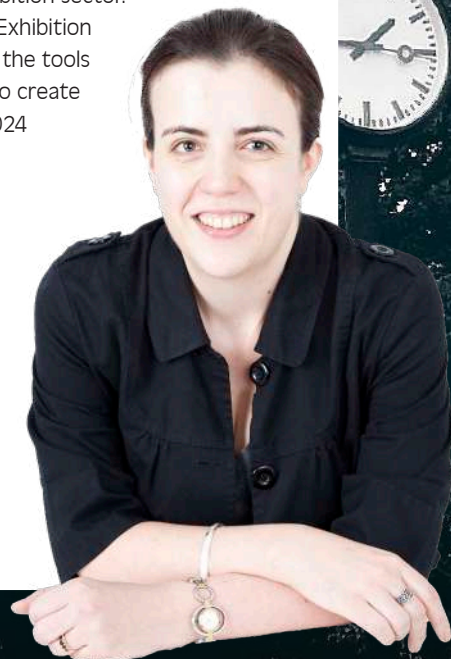
Our feature on the latest trends in exhibition design will inspire you to think outside the box. With a focus on innovative layouts, immersive experiences, and cutting-edge materials, this article showcases how creative design can captivate attendees and leave a lasting impression.

As we look forward to the future of exhibitions, I am reminded of a quote by Albert Einstein: "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity". The challenges of the past few years have indeed brought about new opportunities for growth and innovation in our industry. These difficulties have pushed us to rethink, reimagine, and reinvent how we approach exhibitions, resulting in more resilient and dynamic events.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the exhibition sector. I hope this edition of The Exhibition Planner provides you with the tools and inspiration you need to create extraordinary events in 2024 and beyond.

Yours in MICE,

Lia



Sustainable strategies for GREENING EXHIBITIONS



In today's rapidly evolving world, sustainability has become a crucial element in every industry, and the exhibition sector is no exception.

With increasing awareness and commitment to environmental responsibility, exhibition organisers and suppliers are now focusing on incorporating sustainable practices into their operations. Chat'r Xperience outlines key strategies and insights for greening exhibitions, both from an organising and a stand design perspective.

THE ROLE OF ORGANISERS

Organisers play a pivotal role in driving sustainability. They need to communicate the importance of sustainable practices to exhibitors and suppliers effectively. Investing in reusable stands and materials, avoiding the use of brand-new resources for every event, not only reduces waste but also sets a standard for the entire exhibition industry.

SUSTAINABLE STAND DESIGN

Sustainable stand design is a significant aspect of greening exhibitions. The actual materials used to construct stands are



critical. Opting for reusable materials - such as aluminium frames, engineered fibreboard, and other environmentally friendly materials - as well as avoiding single-use items- can make a substantial difference. Integrating eco-friendly elements like succulents and reusable decorations can enhance the aesthetic appeal while promoting sustainability.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Economic sustainability is another vital component. Supporting local suppliers and

communities is crucial. Using local not only boosts the local economy but also reduces the carbon footprint associated with transportation. It's about making conscious choices that benefit both the environment and the community.

Practical examples of successful sustainable practices in exhibitions highlight the feasibility and benefits of these approaches. For instance, repurposing materials from previous stands not only saves on costs but also significantly reduces waste. This approach



demonstrates that with creativity and commitment, sustainable practices can be seamlessly integrated into stand design.

PROPER PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESSFUL SUSTAINABLE EXHIBITIONS

Starting to plan for sustainability from the very beginning and engaging with sustainability consultants early in the process ensures that every aspect of the event, from venue selection to menu-planning, aligns with sustainable practices. One of the common concerns is balancing sustainability with budget constraints. While sustainable options might have higher upfront costs, they often result in savings over time. For instance, investing in reusable stands can reduce costs for future events. Additionally, looking at sustainability as a marketing advantage enhances the brand's reputation and appeal.

TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

Technology plays a significant role in promoting sustainability in exhibitions. Digital signage, virtual attendance options, and using QR codes instead of printed materials are excellent ways of reducing waste and improving efficiency. The potential of hybrid conferencing and virtual conferencing, fast-tracked by the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to grow, offering more sustainable options for the exhibition industry.



CREATING A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

This involves adopting sustainable practices at all levels, from daily office operations to large-scale events. Educating staff and stakeholders about the importance of sustainability and providing the necessary resources and support can foster a more environmentally conscious workplace. Engaging attendees in sustainability efforts is also important. Providing information about the event's sustainable practices, encouraging the use of public transportation, and offering incentives for sustainable behaviour can significantly impact the overall success of sustainability initiatives.

"Integrating eco-friendly elements like succulents and reusable decorations can enhance the aesthetic appeal while promoting sustainability."

The exhibition industry must continuously adapt to new sustainability challenges and opportunities. Staying updated with industry trends, collaborating with sustainability experts, and committing to ongoing improvement ensures long-term success and environmental responsibility. By incorporating these strategies, the exhibition sector can lead the way in promoting sustainability and setting an example for other industries to follow.

By integrating these sustainable strategies, the exhibition industry can create events that are not only impactful and engaging but also environmentally responsible and economically beneficial. The journey towards sustainability is ongoing, but with collective effort and commitment, significant progress can be made.

CASE STUDY: TOTALENERGIES NAMPO

In 2023, our client - Mason Africa Group - tasked us with designing an environmentally friendly and sustainable exhibition booth for their client TotalEnergies at the 2023 NAMPO exhibition in Bredasdorp, Western Cape. Chat'r Xperience, renowned for designing and constructing exhibition booths that comply with sustainable practices, provided TotalEnergies with a unique design that not only stood out aesthetically but was also 100% manufactured from Ecoboard, which is an engineered fibreboard made from fibres recovered from recycled cardboard boxes.

By using Ecoboard, we were able to manufacture a booth that was easy to transport, flat-packed in a crate, which ensured that the stand was lightweight and did not need to be transported in a heavy vehicle which contributed to a lower carbon footprint. The stand was also constructed in a single day, which reduced our impact on the local community and the environment. All furnishings and décor on the stand were made from recycled items, such as repurposed tractor tyres as coffee tables as well as repurposed buckets and oil drums as seating and meeting tables.

After the show, we stored the stand for our client and reused it at NAMPO Bothaville in 2024. This not only saved our client the cost of producing a new stand but also ensured further sustainability practices by reusing all elements, ensuring minimal environmental impact. The stand set up at Bothaville 2024 has once again been stored for future use, showing Chat'r Xperience's commitment to the 4 R's of sustainability: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover. As a signatory to the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative, this also demonstrates our client's commitment to sustainable exhibition practices. ⁴

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Transforming exhibitions WITH JOHN ARVANITAKIS: A journey towards sustainability



In the fast-paced world of exhibitions and event-planning, few individuals stand out like **John Arvanitakis**.

Known for his passion for sustainability, John has become a beacon of change in an industry that has traditionally thrived on excess and temporary solutions. His journey from law graduate to a leading figure in sustainable event management is as inspiring as it is enlightening.

EARLY CAREER AND DISCOVERY OF A PASSION

John's career began in a rather unconventional manner. After graduating from the University of the Witwatersrand with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Law and International Relations, he found himself working in various family businesses and retail environments, still searching for his true calling.

"My heart was not in the legal profession," John reflects, noting how he left his LLB studies after just one year. His path took a decisive turn when he joined Phototechnik, a photographic distribution company. There, he quickly rose through the ranks to become the South African Brand Manager for several major brands, including Minolta and Samsung.

It was during this period that John discovered his passion for events management and exhibitions. His involvement in product launches and industry trade shows ignited a spark that would shape his future career. "I realised I had a passion for events management," he says.

After a stint in the United Kingdom, John returned to South Africa and co-founded the Magnetic Event Management Group, a partnership that lasted 11 years. His journey then took him to Ogilvy/Brand Activation, where he headed their events department, managing South African Tourism events. However, the entrepreneurial spirit called him back, leading to the founding of Surge Brand Studio and later Chat'r Xperience.

AWAKENING TO SUSTAINABILITY

John's shift towards sustainable practices in event-planning was less an inspiration and more an awakening.

"As one gets older, priorities tend to change," he explains. Living through climate change and pandemics made him acutely aware of his personal impact on the planet. This introspection led him to question how his work affected the environment and the community. "I started to look at our impact on the planet for future generations," he says.



This awakening was cemented during his work in the events industry, where he saw firsthand the waste and environmental damage that large-scale events could cause. "Walking out of an event and seeing the amount of single-use waste really made me open my eyes," John recalls. This realisation prompted him to seek alternatives, eventually joining the Event Greening Forum to find better ways of doing what he loves in an environmentally friendly manner.

CHALLENGES AND OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

Promoting sustainable practices within the exhibition industry has not been without

its challenges. "The biggest challenge is convincing clients and suppliers to come along," John admits. The industry is accustomed to doing things a certain way and change often comes with a financial implication. "Most clients realise there is a climate problem, but when it affects their bottom line they tend to overlook their responsibility."

John addresses this resistance by educating clients about the long-term benefits of sustainability. At Chat'r, they show clients that initial higher costs for sustainable options can lead to greater savings in the long run. "Taking the time to educate and show your clients the savings they will make helps sway them," he explains. This approach not only benefits the environment but also enhances clients' marketing and corporate responsibility reputations.

BALANCING AESTHETICS AND SUSTAINABILITY

For John, balancing the demands of creating visually appealing exhibitions while adhering to sustainable practices is seamless. "There is nothing more visually appealing than the environment," he says. By using sustainable and natural materials, he creates striking and awe-inspiring exhibits that attract attention and drive brand awareness. "Raw and natural materials have a far more striking look," John adds, emphasising that sustainability can enhance, rather than compromise, the visual impact of an event.

INNOVATIVE SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES

John's commitment to sustainability is evident in the innovative strategies and materials he implements. From using seeded paper alternatives for name badges to installing water fountains instead of single-use plastic bottles, his projects reflect a deep dedication to reducing environmental impact. "If you look for it, you will find it," he says, encouraging others to explore the wealth of sustainable alternatives available.

EDUCATING AND ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Educating clients and partners about sustainable practices is a continuous effort for John. By showcasing the long-term benefits and demonstrating the practicality of sustainable choices, he effectively encourages adoption. "Start the



right way by doing the right thing from the get-go," he advises emerging professionals. John believes that sustainability also allows for greater creativity and rewards, creating a positive impact on both the environment and the community.

John Arvanitakis is more than an event planner or merely someone who 'works' in the MICE industry. He is a visionary leader committed to transforming the exhibition

industry through sustainable practices. His journey from a law graduate to a champion of sustainability is a testament to his passion and unwavering dedication to making a positive impact.

In an industry known for its excesses, John's approach stands out as a beacon of hope, showing that it is possible to create beautiful, engaging, and sustainable events that benefit everyone involved. [4](#)



CRAFTING CONNECTIONS: An Exclusive Interview with **Presley Mokotedi**



As we know, any business is not without its challenges and one of the lessons that **Presley Mokotedi** of Garona Communications and Projects has learned is never to underestimate a job based on its monetary value. "It is often the smaller jobs that become your biggest clients".

Meetings had the privilege of having an interview with the owner and managing director of Garona Communications and Projects, Presley Mokotedi, and gained some insight into the person behind the company. Presley is an entrepreneur with the ambition to succeed in the events and exhibition business. He is the founder of Garona Communications and Projects, a company that focuses on events, exhibitions, and marketing.

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN THE EXHIBITIONS INDUSTRY?

Growing up, my dream was to become a journalist. However, being raised in a business-oriented family exposed me to the world of commerce. I worked in the

family business and learned all the lessons of running a successful venture. Upon completing high school, I proceeded to Tshwane University of Technology where I graduated with a Diploma in Public Relations Management, and later studied Business Management at Varsity College and Project Management at Damelin College. I then worked for a reputable exhibition business in Johannesburg where I learned the ins and outs of the exhibition business until I started Garona Communications and Projects in 2008.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE A CAREER IN EXHIBITIONS, AND WHAT KEEPS YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT IT TODAY?

I became inspired by the industry after working for some of the clients I used to service from my previous company. I fell in love with making my clients happy and

decided to start my own business because of my love for events and expos. I felt like my life belonged to making creative structures and exploring more beautiful and creative designs.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE SETS YOU APART FROM OTHERS IN THE EXHIBITIONS INDUSTRY?

I am passionate about exhibitions and not only doing it for money but also for making our clients happy. I have so much pride when my clients get excited after finishing their stand or projects. We pride ourselves in making our clients look great because their brands matter to us. We do not want to offer our clients the same old styles that have existed in the industry for so long. Paying attention to detail makes us different from our competitors. We give our clients the attention they need and that makes them feel special.



CAN YOU SHARE SOME OF YOUR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES OR ACHIEVEMENTS IN YOUR CAREER SO FAR?

My most memorable experience is being given the opportunity by Synergy Business Events to be the sole infrastructure service provider for Meetings Africa and Africa’s Travel Indaba for the past three years, where we have been excelling in making all the clients happy and winning awards for them. Another memorable event was being the conference organiser and infrastructure service provider for the Agricultural Research Council for their conference and exhibition this year.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU’VE FACED IN THE EXHIBITIONS INDUSTRY, AND HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME THEM?

The biggest challenge we faced in our industry was during Covid when we could not work because we were categorised under the events industry. We survived by creating work outside of our scope to keep busy and survive at the same time.

HOW DO YOU STAY UPDATED WITH THE LATEST TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE EXHIBITIONS SECTOR?

I do a lot of research and visit other shows to see what competitors do out there and provide better solutions for our clients.

WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU USE TO ENSURE THAT EVERY EXHIBITION YOU WORK ON IS A SUCCESS?

Planning is my strongest point. Planning to make sure that we succeed in all our work. We always pre-build our structures to avoid any surprises on site. We have an incredibly good production manager, Jayson Thomson, who is always on top of his game in ensuring that we complete our stands well on time.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE A PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING EXHIBITION PROJECT YOU’VE WORKED ON AND HOW YOU MANAGED IT?

Sometimes the biggest challenge we have is printing because the artwork reaches us late, after late approvals from clients but we always have the back-up plan of having other printers on standby to be able to assist us in completing projects timeously.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO NEWCOMERS IN THE EXHIBITIONS INDUSTRY WHO ASPIRE TO ACHIEVE THE SAME LEVEL OF SUCCESS AS YOU?

Learning is key. Ask questions. Have a mentor to help you. Be ambitious and never fear approaching clients. Build professional relationships and always collaborate on jobs where possible, in order for you to finish well at the end of the project, and that will give you a good

reputation to target more clients and win them over.

LOOKING AHEAD, WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR CAREER IN THE EXHIBITIONS INDUSTRY?

I have been investing in the business by buying good quality machinery and printing machines. The business has expanded and grown a lot because of the successful shows we have been producing. Our goal is to be the best we can be. The goal is also to have more clients to service and to grow the business more.

As professionals, we have the privilege of shaping memorable experiences for exhibition and event attendees, fostering connections, and leaving a positive impact on communities. Whether it’s curating captivating displays or orchestrating eco-friendly initiatives, companies like Garona play a pivotal role in creating moments that resonate. So, as we continue to navigate the events and exhibitions landscape, let’s remember the power of collaboration, creativity, and conscious choices.



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Navigating the future of exhibitions in Africa

As the global exhibition industry continues to evolve, Africa's unique market presents both challenges and opportunities for organisers and participants. Successfully navigating the exhibition landscape across the continent requires a deep understanding of local contexts, strategic partnerships, and innovative approaches.

UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET

Africa's exhibition industry is marked by its diversity and complexity. From the bustling urban centres of South Africa to the emerging markets in East and West Africa, each region offers distinct opportunities and hurdles. Understanding local contexts and tailoring approaches

to suit the specific needs of each market is essential. This includes recognising the cultural nuances, economic conditions, and logistical challenges that can impact the success of an event.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

One of the critical strategies for success is forming strategic partnerships. Collaborating with local entities - whether government bodies, local businesses, or community organisations - can provide invaluable insights and resources. These partnerships help navigate bureaucratic hurdles and ensure that events resonate with local audiences. Working with local suppliers for stand construction and services supports the local economy and builds a more authentic and engaging event experience.

Successfully navigating Africa's diverse exhibition market requires understanding local contexts, forming strategic partnerships, and leveraging technology and innovation.

EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The transformative power of technology in the exhibition sector cannot be overstated. From digital marketing strategies to integrating advanced technologies like mobile keys and voice recognition in hospitality, innovation is key to staying competitive.

Events that leverage technology to enhance attendee experience, such as through interactive displays or virtual reality, can set themselves apart in a crowded marketplace. Additionally,

technology can streamline operations, improve security, and provide valuable data analytics to inform future events.

SUSTAINABILITY AS A CORE PRINCIPLE

Sustainability is increasingly becoming a critical focus for the future of exhibitions in Africa. There is a growing demand for environmentally responsible practices. Implementing these across different regions presents challenges. Credible and transparent certification systems are needed to help consumers identify truly sustainable options. Successful examples - such as net-zero emissions strategies - can serve as models to emulate. Prioritising sustainability allows organisers to reduce their environmental footprint and appeal to an eco-conscious audience.

THE POWER OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION

Despite the rise of digital and virtual events, face-to-face interactions remain irreplaceable, especially in Africa. Personal connections are highly valued and in-person meetings often lead to more substantial business deals and partnerships. Events that effectively facilitate these interactions can foster stronger relationships and drive business growth. This emphasis on face-to-face engagement highlights the need for high-quality venues and infrastructure to support large-scale events.

CHALLENGES OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBILITY

Infrastructure and accessibility are significant challenges in many African markets. The availability of suitable venues, reliable transport, and essential services can vary widely between regions. Flexibility and adaptability are crucial in overcoming these hurdles. Organisers may need to consider alternative venues or temporary structures in areas where traditional exhibition spaces are unavailable. Additionally, addressing visa and travel restrictions is crucial for attracting international participants.

BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

The success of any exhibition relies heavily on the people behind it. Investing in staff training and development is essential for building a skilled and motivated workforce. This includes operational staff as well as marketing and sales teams who engage with potential exhibitors and attendees.

By cultivating a team of top-tier staff, organisers can ensure a high level of service and a positive experience for all participants.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF EXHIBITIONS TO LOCAL ECONOMIES

Exhibitions play a crucial role in stimulating local economies, bringing a host of economic benefits that extend far beyond the event itself. From job creation to boosting tourism and fostering business growth, these events can have a transformative impact on the regions that host them.

JOB CREATION

Exhibitions are a significant source of employment, both directly and indirectly. The preparation, execution, and wrap-up of an exhibition require a diverse workforce, including:

- **Event-Planning and Management:** Professionals who coordinate the logistics, marketing, and overall execution of the event.
 - **Construction and Set-up:** Workers who build and dismantle exhibition stands and infrastructure.
 - **Hospitality and Services:** Staff providing catering, cleaning, security, and other services during the event.
 - **Technical Support:** Experts in IT, audio-visual set-up, and maintenance.
- Additionally, local businesses benefit from increased demand for their services, such as transportation, accommodation, and retail, which also creates temporary and permanent job opportunities.

BOOSTING TOURISM

Exhibitions attract visitors from various regions and countries, significantly boosting local tourism. This influx of visitors translates into increased occupancy rates in hotels, higher footfall in restaurants, as well as greater demand for local attractions and services. Key tourism benefits include:

- **Hotel Bookings:** High-profile exhibitions can lead to substantial bookings, especially in larger venues and cities.
- **Dining and Entertainment:** Visitors explore local dining options, entertainment venues, and nightlife, contributing to the hospitality sector.
- **Local Attractions:** Tourists often extend their stay to visit local attractions, thereby increasing revenue for museums, parks, and cultural sites.

- The ripple effect of increased tourism extends to transportation services, including taxis, car rentals, and public transport, which see a surge in demand during exhibition periods.

BUSINESS GROWTH

Exhibitions provide a platform for businesses to showcase their products and services, engage with potential customers, and network with industry peers. This environment fosters business growth in several ways:

- **Market Expansion:** Companies gain exposure to new markets and audiences, facilitating business expansion and new partnerships.
- **Sales and Contracts:** Direct interaction with customers and partners often leads to immediate sales and long-term contracts, boosting revenue streams.
- **Innovation and Collaboration:** Exhibitions offer opportunities for businesses to discover the latest industry trends, innovations, and technologies, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration.

LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACT

The economic impact of exhibitions extends well beyond the event dates. The relationships and deals forged during exhibitions can lead to sustained business growth and investment in the local economy. Furthermore, the increased visibility of the host city or region can attract future events, before creating a cycle of economic benefit.

FUNDING AND INVESTMENT IN THE EXHIBITION INDUSTRY

The exhibition industry, a critical component of the global economy, requires substantial funding and investment to thrive. However, securing adequate financial resources presents both challenges and opportunities. Understanding these aspects is crucial for stakeholders aiming to navigate this dynamic sector successfully.

CHALLENGES ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

- **Volatility:** Economic downturns, such as recessions or global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, can severely impact the availability of funding and investment in the exhibition industry. Investors may become risk-averse, and budget cuts can limit financial resources. ▶



Left: Dr Werner van Zyl talking about the neuroscience of exhibitions and events at the recent AAXO Leadership Summit.

- **Market Fluctuations:** Exchange rate volatility and inflation can affect the cost of organising exhibitions, making it challenging to budget effectively and secure consistent funding.

HIGH INITIAL COSTS

- **Infrastructure Development:** Building and maintaining exhibition venues require significant capital investment. This includes costs for construction, technology integration, and ongoing maintenance.
- **Operational Expenses:** Operational costs - including staffing, marketing, logistics, and security - can be substantial. Securing enough funding to cover these expenses can be challenging, especially for new or smaller exhibitions.

ACCESS TO FUNDING

- **Limited Access:** Smaller and emerging markets often struggle to attract investors owing to perceived risks and limited exposure. Access to traditional financing options, such as bank loans, may be restricted.
- **Competitive Landscape:** The exhibition industry is highly competitive, and securing funding can be difficult when competing against well-established events with proven track records.

REGULATORY AND BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES

- **Compliance Costs:** Navigating regulatory requirements and obtaining necessary permits can be costly and time-consuming. Compliance with local, national, and international regulations adds to the financial burden.

- **Government Support:** Inconsistent government support and incentives can hinder investment opportunities. Policies may vary widely across regions, affecting the ability to secure public funding.

OPPORTUNITIES INNOVATIVE FUNDING MODELS

- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Collaborations between government entities and private investors can provide the necessary funding for large-scale exhibitions. These partnerships can leverage public resources and private sector efficiency.
- **Crowdfunding:** This offers innovative ways to raise funds by engaging a broad audience. Crowdfunding can be particularly effective for niche exhibitions with dedicated following.

ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT

- **Global Investors:** Africa's emerging markets can attract foreign investors seeking new opportunities. Highlighting the growth potential and unique market characteristics can entice international investment.
- **Incentives and Tax Breaks:** Governments can offer incentives and tax breaks to attract foreign investment in the exhibition industry. These measures can reduce the financial burden on investors and encourage participation.

TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

- **Virtual and Hybrid Events:** The rise of virtual and hybrid events offers new revenue streams and reduces some

traditional costs associated with physical exhibitions. These formats can attract a broader audience and generate additional sponsorship opportunities.

- **Data Analytics:** Leveraging data analytics can provide insights into attendee behaviour and preferences, enabling organisers to tailor experiences and attract targeted investments. Data-driven strategies can enhance marketing efforts and increase funding opportunities.

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

- **Green Investments:** There is growing interest in sustainability and environmentally friendly practices. Exhibitions that prioritise sustainability can attract investment from green funds and socially responsible investors.
- **Grants and Subsidies:** Various grants and subsidies are available for events that incorporate sustainable practices. These financial aids can reduce operational costs and support long-term investment in sustainable infrastructure.

GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

- **Development Funds:** Governments and international organisations often have development funds aimed at promoting economic growth through events and exhibitions. Accessing these funds can provide significant financial support.
- **Trade Associations:** Trade associations and industry bodies can offer financial assistance, networking opportunities, and promotional support. Collaborating with these entities can enhance credibility and attract investment.

The future of exhibitions in Africa is bright, with ample opportunities for growth and innovation. Understanding local markets, forging strategic partnerships, embracing technology, and committing to sustainability are key strategies for navigating the complexities of the continent and delivering successful events. As the exhibition industry continues to evolve, those who can effectively blend these elements will be well-positioned to lead the way in Africa's dynamic and promising market.

TOP 10 FACTS FOR UNLOCKING SUCCESS IN AFRICA'S EXHIBITION LANDSCAPE

1 DIVERSE MARKET DYNAMICS

Africa's exhibition industry spans from the bustling urban centres of South Africa to emerging markets in East and West Africa. Each region presents unique opportunities and challenges, necessitating tailored strategies that consider cultural, economic, and logistical nuances.

2 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY

Forming strategic partnerships with local entities - including government bodies, businesses, and community organisations - provides invaluable insights and resources. These collaborations help navigate bureaucratic processes and ensure events resonate with local audiences.

3 TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS EXHIBITIONS

Leveraging technology, from digital marketing to advanced hospitality features like mobile keys and voice recognition, enhances attendee experiences and operational efficiency. Interactive displays and virtual reality can set events apart in a crowded marketplace.

4 SUSTAINABILITY IS CRUCIAL

With a growing demand for environmentally responsible practices, establishing credible certification systems is essential. Prioritising

sustainability reduces the environmental footprint and attracts eco-conscious participants, with net-zero emissions initiatives serving as exemplary models.

5 FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION IS IRREPLACEABLE

Despite the rise of digital events, personal connections in Africa are highly valued. In-person meetings often result in more substantial business deals and partnerships, emphasising the need for high-quality venues and infrastructure.

6 INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES

The availability of suitable venues, reliable transport, and essential services varies widely across Africa. Flexibility and adaptability are crucial, with organisers considering alternative venues or temporary structures and addressing visa and travel restrictions to attract international participants.

7 INVESTING IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The success of any exhibition relies on the people behind it. Investing in staff training and development ensures a skilled and motivated workforce, enhancing the overall event experience for exhibitors and attendees.

8 LOCAL ENGAGEMENT ENHANCES AUTHENTICITY

Working with local suppliers for stand construction and services supports the local economy and creates a more authentic and engaging event experience. This local engagement is key to building trust and credibility in the market.

9 DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS

Collecting and analysing data through advanced technologies provides valuable insights for future event-planning. Understanding attendee behaviour and preferences helps organisers tailor their offerings and improve overall event effectiveness.

10 BRIGHT FUTURE FOR AFRICAN EXHIBITIONS

The future of exhibitions in Africa is promising, with ample opportunities for growth and innovation. By understanding local markets, forming strategic partnerships, embracing technology, and committing to sustainability, organisers can navigate the continent's complexities and deliver successful events.

These strategies highlight the unique aspects of Africa's exhibition landscape, providing a roadmap for organisers and participants to thrive in this dynamic market. [4](#)

"From digital marketing strategies to integrating advanced technologies like mobile keys and voice recognition in hospitality; innovation is key to staying competitive."

Think tank on navigating the challenges and opportunities in the African event and exhibition industry at the AAXO Leadership Summit.

THE *POWER* OF EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS IN FOSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Events and exhibitions play a pivotal role in driving economic growth. Learn how neuroscience can help with improving your event.

The profound impact these events have on local economies is evidenced by increased tourism, job creation as well as business development. Recent statistics indicate a robust recovery for the global exhibition industry post-COVID-19, with a notable 19.6% growth in value between 2022 and 2023. This recovery signals the industry's potential to significantly contribute to this economic progress.

BOOSTING LOCAL ECONOMIES

Events and exhibitions considerably boost local economies. These events drive increased tourism, create jobs, and spur business development. The global exhibition industry has shown a strong post-pandemic resurgence. Furthermore, 82% of event attendees now prefer in-person events, underscoring the industry's resilience and potential to contribute significantly to economic progress.

SUCCESS STORIES AND STRATEGIES

Various strategies and success stories from different regions highlight the importance of understanding and leveraging local markets. For example, countries like Rwanda have seen substantial growth in

international associations, boosting their local economies. Aligning with regional strengths and focusing on sectors such as agriculture and clean energy, which show resilience and growth potential, are identified as key strategies.

INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS

Valuable insights into harnessing the potential of the MICE sector for economic progress emphasise the need for strategic-planning and investment in infrastructure to support large-scale events. Exhibitions promote trade and investment by attracting international buyers and investors to local markets, demonstrating their crucial role in economic development.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The industry faces challenges such as increasing costs and the need for sustainable practices. Providing value to exhibitors and attendees through logistical support and meaningful engagement opportunities is essential. Supporting smaller, local events to drive inclusive economic growth and create opportunities in underserved communities is also vital.

DRIVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Events and exhibitions play a significant role in driving inclusive economic growth. Initiatives that bring exhibitions to townships and rural areas are crucial for fostering economic activity and job creation in these regions. Collaboration between government and private sector stakeholders ensures that the benefits of events and exhibitions are widely distributed.

Events and exhibitions can be powerful tools for economic development. By sharing success stories and strategies, the potential for the MICE sector to drive growth, innovation, and job creation is highlighted. Strategic-planning, investment in infrastructure, and inclusive practices are vital for maximising the economic benefits of events and exhibitions.

As the global exhibition industry continues to recover and grow, the lessons and strategies shared will be invaluable for stakeholders looking to harness the power of events and exhibitions for economic progress.



ENHANCING EXHIBITION PROFITABILITY THROUGH NEUROSCIENCE

In the dynamic world of exhibitions, understanding human behaviour through the lens of neuroscience can significantly boost economic viability. By applying neuropsychological principles, organisers can create environments that not only attract visitors but also foster deeper engagement and drive business outcomes.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

The human brain is wired for safety and social connection. When people feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to engage, make decisions, and take actions that benefit them and the exhibitors. Ensuring a safe, welcoming environment is fundamental to successful exhibitions. This involves designing spaces where visitors feel comfortable, valued, and intrigued.

CREATING MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES

Neuroscience shows that emotional responses play a crucial role in memory-retention. Exhibitors can leverage this by creating emotionally engaging experiences that visitors will remember. This could include interactive displays, sensory experiences, and personalised interactions. The goal is to make visitors feel a positive connection with the brand, enhancing the likelihood of future engagement and loyalty.

STRATEGIC USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Incorporating technology such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and interactive displays can enhance visitor experiences. These technologies engage multiple senses, creating immersive environments that captivate attention and facilitate deeper learning. Additionally, technology can streamline operations and provide valuable data analytics to refine future events.

APPLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological safety is crucial for visitor engagement. When attendees feel safe and understood, they are more likely to interact and make purchases. This can be achieved through clear signage, friendly staff, and well-organised spaces that reduce anxiety and confusion. Creating a sense of security helps visitors focus on the exhibits and enjoy their experience.



LEVERAGING SOCIAL PROOF

Humans are inherently social beings who look to others for cues on how to behave. Exhibitors can use this by showcasing testimonials, reviews and endorsements. Seeing that others have had positive experiences increases trust and encourages new visitors to engage with the exhibits. Highlighting successful case studies and user stories can significantly enhance credibility.

UTILISING CONTRAST AND SCARCITY

Neuroscience suggests that the human brain responds strongly to contrast and scarcity. Exhibitors can highlight special offers, limited-time deals, and unique products to create a sense of urgency and exclusivity. By making certain items or experiences seem scarce, they can drive interest and prompt immediate action from visitors.

ENHANCING EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Engaging visitors emotionally can make an exhibition stand out. This can be achieved through storytelling, visually appealing designs, and interactive elements that resonate with visitors on a personal level. Emotional engagement not only makes the experience memorable but also drives deeper connections with the brand.

OPTIMISING LAYOUT AND DESIGN

The physical layout of an exhibition space can influence visitor behaviour. Clear, intuitive designs that guide visitors through the space without overwhelming

Events and exhibitions play a crucial role in boosting local economies, driving tourism, job creation, and business development.

them are essential. Using open spaces, strategic lighting, and comfortable seating areas can enhance the overall experience and encourage visitors to spend more time exploring.

PROVIDING CLEAR AND SIMPLE CHOICES

Too many choices can overwhelm visitors, leading to decision fatigue. Exhibitors should aim to present clear, simple options that make it easy for visitors to engage. This can be achieved by grouping products logically, providing concise information, and offering straightforward paths to purchase or learn more.

BUILDING ANTICIPATION AND SURPRISE

Creating moments of surprise and delight can enhance visitor experiences. This could include unexpected giveaways, surprise guest appearances, or interactive sessions that captivate attention. Building anticipation for these moments can keep visitors engaged and excited throughout the event.

By integrating neuroscience into exhibition design and strategy, organisers can create environments that not only attract visitors but also foster deeper engagement and drive economic growth. Understanding human behaviour and leveraging these insights can transform exhibitions into powerful tools for business success, ensuring that events are both memorable and economically viable. ⁴

PAVING THE PATH TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

In an era where environmental consciousness is paramount, the MICE industry is stepping up to address its significant carbon footprint.

The MICE industry plays a significant role in global business and tourism, bringing together millions of people from around the world. However, this sector also contributes substantially to the carbon footprint, given the extensive travel, resource consumption, and waste generation associated with large-scale events.

As the urgency to address climate change intensifies, the MICE industry is increasingly adopting sustainable practices to mitigate its environmental impact. Here, we explore the initiatives and efforts by industry leaders to reduce their carbon footprint, highlighting case studies and innovative strategies that are setting new standards for sustainability.

THE GROWING IMPERATIVE FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN MICE

As the world grapples with the realities of climate change, the pressure on industries to adopt sustainable practices has never been greater. The MICE industry, with its vast scale and influence, is uniquely

positioned to drive significant change. Leaders within the sector are more and more recognising the need to balance business objectives with environmental stewardship, striving to create events that are not only successful but also sustainable.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

The movement towards sustainability in the MICE industry is not new. It gained momentum during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and, since then, the sector has made considerable strides. The aim is ambitious: achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, with an interim target of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030. This commitment necessitates strategic-planning, industry-wide collaboration, and a relentless focus on innovation.

One of the most significant initiatives driving sustainability in the MICE sector is the Net Zero Carbon Events (NZCE) initiative, launched during COP26. Administered by the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC), NZCE aims to align

the industry with the Paris Agreement's goals. The initiative encourages stakeholders to publish comprehensive plans detailing their journey towards net zero emissions by 2050. Over 400 stakeholders have signed the pledge, committing to concrete actions such as energy management, sustainable procurement, and waste reduction.

PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Industry leaders emphasise that integrating sustainability into event-planning starts with setting manageable, aligned goals. By focusing on a few Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) per event, organisers can make consistent progress. Key areas of focus include reducing waste, improving resource efficiency as well as engaging local communities to ensure a positive legacy.

At Meetings Africa 2024, a significant event in the MICE calendar, sustainability took centre stage. The event featured a session hosted by the Event Greening Forum, where industry experts like Alex Alles from the JMIC, discussed the



importance of the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative. It showcased practical steps and collaborative efforts to drive sustainability, demonstrating the industry's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND BUILDING A LEGACY

A critical component of sustainable event management is engaging with local communities. This approach not only reduces the environmental impact but also boosts the local economy and leaves a positive legacy. Sustainable practices lead to cost-savings, enhance reputation, and provide a better return on investment, aligning economic success with environmental responsibility.

In Africa, AAXO's partnership with the EGF exemplifies how industry collaborations can drive sustainability. This alliance focuses on promoting sustainable event practices, knowledge exchanges, and training sessions. AAXO and the EGF aim to raise sustainability standards across the continent's exhibition sector, so aligning with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063.

CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY AND GLOBAL IMPACTS

Despite significant progress, the MICE industry faces substantial challenges in achieving sustainability. High levels of waste

and resource consumption are inherent to large-scale events. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders to adopt responsible practices and make sustainability a core component of all event-related activities.

The WTM Responsible Tourism Awards highlight businesses and initiatives making a significant impact through responsible tourism practices. Winners such as Denis Private Island in the Seychelles and Grootbos Lodge in South Africa showcase how sustainable tourism can drive positive environmental and social outcomes. These case studies serve as models for the MICE industry, demonstrating the benefits of integrating sustainability into event-planning.

FUTURE TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The future of the MICE industry is intertwined with its ability to innovate and adapt to emerging trends. Technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) are revolutionising event management, offering new ways to enhance sustainability. By leveraging these technologies, the MICE industry can create more dynamic, personalised and environmentally friendly events.

Innovative technologies are already making waves in the industry. AI can optimise logistics and resource

management, reducing waste and improving efficiency. IoT devices provide real-time data on energy usage and attendee behaviour, allowing organisers to make data-driven decisions that enhance sustainability. These advancements highlight the potential for technology to drive the next phase of sustainable development in the MICE industry.

The MICE industry is at a critical juncture where sustainability is no longer optional but imperative. Through initiatives like the Net Zero Carbon Events, strategic industry collaborations, and the adoption of innovative technologies, the sector is making significant strides towards reducing its carbon footprint. As the industry continues to evolve, the focus on sustainability will only grow stronger, driving more innovative and environmentally friendly approaches to event management. Embracing sustainability not only benefits the planet but also enhances the credibility and success of the MICE industry. By setting ambitious goals, engaging local communities, and leveraging cutting-edge technologies, the sector can pave the way for a greener, more sustainable future.

As industry leaders and stakeholders continue to collaborate and innovate, the MICE industry will undoubtedly become a beacon of sustainability, setting standards for others to follow. ►

Top 10 facts about sustainability in the MICE industry



1

SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN GLOBAL CARBON FOOTPRINT

The MICE industry significantly contributes to the global carbon footprint owing to extensive travel, resource consumption, and waste generation associated with large-scale events.

2

COMMITMENT TO NET ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS

The MICE industry aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, with an interim goal of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030, aligning with the Paris Agreement.

3

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The MICE industry is investing in education and training for event organisers and stakeholders to ensure they are well-equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to implement sustainable practices effectively. This includes promoting sustainable event-organising, conducting training sessions, and engaging in knowledge exchanges.

4

STRATEGIC INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

Industry-wide collaboration and strategic-planning are essential for achieving sustainability goals. The sector has made considerable strides since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

5

PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Integrating sustainability into event-planning starts with setting manageable goals aligned with a few Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) per event, focusing on waste reduction, resource efficiency, and community engagement.

6

ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Sustainable event management involves engaging local communities, reducing environmental impact, boosting the local economy, and leaving a positive legacy. This approach leads to cost-savings, enhanced reputation, and better ROI.

7

CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY

The MICE industry faces substantial challenges, including high levels of waste and resource consumption. Achieving sustainability requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders to adopt responsible practices.

8

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) are revolutionising event management, offering new ways to enhance sustainability through optimised logistics, resource management, and real-time data.

9

SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The WTM Responsible Tourism Awards highlight businesses making a significant impact through responsible tourism practices, showcasing successful case studies like Denis Private Island in the Seychelles and Grootbos Lodge in South Africa.

10

FUTURE TRENDS

The future of the MICE industry is intertwined with its ability to innovate and adapt to emerging trends, so driving more dynamic, personalised, and environmentally friendly events through continuous innovation and technology adoption. [4](#)

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Greening THE SCENE

Embracing eco-friendly practices for
a greener future



As the world shifts towards a more sustainable future, the events industry is following suit. Exhibitions and trade shows are undergoing a significant transformation, with a growing focus on eco-friendliness and sustainability.

From reusable stands to energy-efficient lighting, exhibition organisers and exhibitors are increasingly adopting environmentally responsible practices to reduce their carbon footprint and create a more sustainable event experience.

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EVENTS: BUILDING COMMUNITY AND DRIVING GROWTH

Events and exhibitions play a vital role in society, fulfilling various social needs and fostering community engagement. They provide platforms for people to connect, share experiences, and learn from each other. This in turn promotes social cohesion and a sense of belonging. By bringing people together and facilitating knowledge-sharing, events and exhibitions contribute to the development of a more informed and progressive society. Moreover, they often serve as a catalyst for economic growth, urban renewal,

and cultural revitalisation, making them an essential component of a thriving and vibrant community. By prioritising functionality, diversity, and sustainability in event-planning, it can be ensured that these social benefits are achieved while also minimising the environmental impact of these gatherings.

Event venues play a vital role in reducing the environmental footprint of the events industry. Many venues are now incorporating sustainable practices into their operations such as energy-efficient lighting and recycling programmes. Some venues are also investing in greener energy sources like solar panels, while others are implementing sustainable catering practices, like using locally sourced and organic ingredients.



Gallagher Convention Centre



DID YOU KNOW

Did you know that the events industry is one of the fastest-growing contributors to waste and carbon emissions, with an estimated 1.3 million tonnes of waste generated each year? However, the industry is taking steps to reduce its environmental impact with many events now incorporating sustainable practices such as recycling, composting, and energy-efficient lighting.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, CARBON-REDUCING ACTION!

Consider entertainment options that have a lower carbon footprint. Virtual performances or digital experiences can significantly reduce travel-related emissions. Flash-Forward has become an industry leader in the virtual experiences field.

ZERO WASTE WARRIORS

Aim to minimise waste by implementing recycling and composting programmes or even donating to local charities after an event. Use reusable materials and opt for eco-friendly or recyclable food packaging from companies such as King Pack.

THE RISE OF THE ECO-GASTRONOMES

Choose caterers who prioritise sustainable practices. Look for locally sourced, organic, and seasonal food options. You could also include plant-based menu items to reduce the environmental impact of meat production. Companies like Catercom can assist you in providing a variety of greener food options as well as menu customisation to your specific requirements or preferences.

LESS IS MORE

By using recycled or upcycled materials and components for your exhibition stands, you decrease the demand for new resources. By repurposing existing materials, you contribute towards minimising waste. Companies like Booth Exhibits can provide you with various green options to suit your needs. Their stands are known to be "good for the planet, and good for your reputation".

PAPERLESS PIONEERS

Using virtual invitations and other online resources aids the reduction of paper usage in the events industry. Other digital alternatives to consider would be projected images or virtual backdrops. By embracing technology, we create memorable experiences while treading lightly on our planet. 4Mal Media offers a comprehensive suite of design services. From brochures to wall banners, they can design it all!

ECO-EXPRESS

Behind the scenes of any successful exhibition lies a meticulous logistical operation. While this aspect might remain invisible to the visitors, its environmental impact is anything but subtle. Sourcing materials and services from local suppliers can dramatically cut down on transport-related carbon emissions. When it comes to transporting staff or guests, companies like Greatride Shuttles are a great option to consider.

SUSTAINABLE SWAG

The giveaways at your exhibition stand are more than just freebies. They're tangible reminders of your brand, encapsulating your business' values in a small, take-home package. So, it's essential that they resonate with your eco-conscious messaging.

Promotional items have also evolved dramatically. From pens made of recycled materials to sustainably sourced notebooks, reusable, branded tote bags and stainless steel straws, these are great examples of the perfect eco-friendly gift. Giftique ZA offers a range infused with

individuality and attention to detail, setting their products apart from all the other generic options in the existing national corporate gifting industry.

By incorporating sustainable practices into our events or exhibitions, we not only reduce our environmental impact but also inspire others to follow suit. Remember, every small step toward sustainability counts. Apart from the event-planning and organising, you can also extend the gesture of eco-friendlier practices into your home. Making use of digital platforms like The Filtery to assist you in making better and 'greener' choices.

"By incorporating sustainable practices into our events or exhibitions, we not only reduce our environmental impact but also inspire others to follow suit."

In the spirit of eco-fabulousness, let's wrap up all event-planning with a twist of green! Imagine attendees sipping organic kombucha from reusable bamboo cups, grooving to tunes powered by solar panels, and networking under LED lights that whisper sweet nothings to the environment. As the event concludes, it will be a bid farewell with a high-five to Mother Earth.

By embracing eco-friendly practices and technologies, we can reduce the environmental impact of events while enhancing the overall experience for attendees. As the industry continues to evolve, it's exciting to think about the innovative solutions that will emerge, helping us to create a more sustainable and responsible events landscape.

Cheers to greener gatherings! 4



Carol Weaving,
MD of RX Africa,
explores a decade
of innovation and
networking at the
World Travel Market
(WTM).

A DECADE OF DISCOVERY

As the WTM celebrates its 10th anniversary, it is clear that the event has matured into a pivotal platform in the travel industry. Carol Weaving, a seasoned leader in the sector and MD of RX Africa, reflects on WTM's evolution from its modest beginnings to becoming a premier B2B exhibition.

Originally drawing a crowd from the industry to network and forge connections, WTM has transformed into a serious business arena where substantial deals are not just discussed but concluded. The growth in exhibitor numbers from about 100 to 650 exemplifies its expanding influence and reach across the globe, marking WTM as not only a hub of networking but also a cradle of industry advancement and opportunity.

REMARKABLE GROWTH AND GLOBAL REACH

Weaving notes the remarkable expansion of WTM, which has seen a 600% increase

in exhibitors since its inception. This year, the event attracted 650 exhibitors, demonstrating its extensive influence and reach across the global stage. The significant surge in buyer participation, growing by about 630%, reflects WTM's effectiveness in fostering substantial business engagements and facilitating impactful networking opportunities.

The event's international representation has been particularly noteworthy, with participants from over 88 countries converging to engage in significant business undertakings. This diverse international presence underscores WTM's role as a B2B platform where real business outcomes are a primary focus, aligning with Weaving's vision of the event as not just a place for networking but a venue where substantial transactions and partnerships are formed.

EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

In response to the dynamic demands of the modern travel industry, WTM 2024 has embraced technology and sustainability,

introducing features like the Travel Tech Theatre and a dedicated Sustainability Village. These initiatives highlight the event's commitment to integrating innovative solutions and sustainable practices into the core of its operations, catering to an increasingly environmentally conscious audience.

Furthermore, WTM has expanded its programme to include over 120 content sessions that cover a vast array of topics from luxury and sports tourism to effective marketing strategies and emerging trends. These sessions are designed to provide attendees with valuable insights and practical knowledge, helping them to navigate the complexities of the tourism market effectively.

Weaving also emphasises the importance of genuine, authentic experiences in enhancing the appeal of WTM. This year, the event organised excursions to various locales around Cape Town, allowing participants to experience the region's renowned wine farms and scenic venues. These outings are part of a broader strategy to showcase the unique cultural

and natural resources of South Africa, enriching the WTM experience beyond the conventional conference setting.

REFLECTING ON TWO DECADES OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

At the sustainability conference that ran parallel to WTM, a deep analysis of responsible tourism underscored its progress and the persistent challenges the industry faces. The presentation traced the historical impact of the 1960s and 1970s on environmental awareness, noting the limited progress following global environmental conferences. Issues such as over-tourism were highlighted, showing how increased tourism often damages the environments it relies on, with a slow industry response to urgent environmental crises.

Speakers shared insights from efforts to integrate sustainable practices within tourism policies, particularly in South Africa, but noted that such initiatives often only scratch the surface without effecting deeper systemic change. The session concluded with a strong call to action for the tourism sector to adopt sustainability not only in policy but as a fundamental aspect of business operations, urging immediate and decisive action to align practices with responsible tourism principles to preserve our planet for future generations.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION

The Dutch Tour Operating Association is pioneering a transformative approach to sustainable tourism aimed at achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Their strategy involves a "backcasting" method where the desired future state is first envisioned and steps are then determined to achieve this vision. This includes extensive workshops with Dutch tour operators to develop a detailed action plan.

The Association emphasises collaboration and transparency, working with both local and international partners to integrate sustainability throughout the travel value chain. They are setting specific sustainability targets for their tours, requiring longer stays and sustainable supply chain practices, and proposing that members must demonstrate sustainable practices for membership.

Furthermore, they focus on educating tourists about the environmental, social, and economic impacts of their travel choices to promote more responsible behaviour. Overall, the Dutch Tour Operating Association's comprehensive strategy aims to lead the industry towards broader global sustainability objectives, serving as a model for others in the sector.

A CRUCIAL DEBATE ON CERTIFICATION AND CONSUMER TRUST

There is a growing demand for sustainable travel and an urgent need for more credible and transparent certification systems in the tourism sector. Experts highlight several issues, including the challenge consumers face in finding verifiable sustainable options owing to the lack of rigorous certification processes. The European Union is responding by implementing directives to ensure better accountability and transparency in sustainability reporting by businesses.

"Weaving notes the remarkable expansion of WTM, which has seen a 600% increase in exhibitors since its inception."

A significant concern discussed is the gap between advertised sustainable practices and actual implementation, as exemplified by inefficient energy use in hotels. The future of sustainable tourism could benefit from new frameworks, like a unified scoring system, to communicate better and assess sustainability efforts, aiding consumers in making informed travel choices.

THE INTEGRATION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The hospitality industry is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by the adoption of advanced technologies such as mobile keys, voice recognition, and cloud-based systems. These innovations are enhancing guest experiences by providing more convenience, personalisation, and streamlining operations by improving security and operational efficiency. Mobile keys allow guests to use their smartphones as room

keys while voice-activated assistants enable hands-free control of room settings. Cloud-based systems reduce IT overhead, enhance data security, and allow for scalable operations without major upfront investments.

Despite the benefits, the integration of these technologies poses challenges, including the need for staff training and adjustment to new processes. However, with proper management, these challenges can be overcome, leading to greater efficiency and guest satisfaction. As technology continues to evolve, embracing these changes will be crucial for hotels to meet the expectations of modern travellers and maintain a competitive edge.

ELEVATING TRAVEL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN AFRICA'S THRIVING MARKET

During one of the panel discussions, the emphasis was placed on boosting inclusivity and diversity within the African travel sector to unlock its vast economic potential. Key topics included the integration of local cultures and environmental sustainability into travel packages, which not only preserve heritage but also enhance authenticity.

The panel highlighted the importance of representation in marketing, particularly for historically overlooked groups like Black women, to foster a more inclusive atmosphere. Discussion also covered the need for personalised travel experiences tailored to specific community needs, such as dietary and accessibility requirements, which can significantly enhance traveller satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, panellists stressed the value of involving local communities.

It's evident that the forum has not only served as a crucible for industry evolution but also as a beacon for future developments in global tourism. With its vast array of discussions, from the integration of cutting-edge technologies in hospitality to the pressing imperatives of sustainable travel and inclusivity, WTM continues to spearhead transformative changes.

These initiatives underscore a commitment to reshaping the travel landscape into one that is more sustainable, inclusive, and technologically advanced, ensuring the industry's resilience and relevance in the years to come. [4](#)

HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT VENDORS FOR YOUR EXHIBITION NEEDS



Selecting the right vendors for your exhibition needs is crucial to ensuring the success of your event.

A well-chosen vendor can elevate your exhibition, making it memorable and impactful for all attendees. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you navigate the vendor-selection process.

UNDERSTAND YOUR EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS

Before you begin your search for vendors, it is essential to define your exhibition goals and objectives clearly. Ask yourself what you aim to achieve with the exhibition. Is it to showcase new products, build brand awareness, or network with industry peers? Understanding your goals will help you identify the specific services and products you need.

Next, create a detailed list of all the services and products required for the exhibition. This might include booth design and construction, audiovisual equipment, catering, transportation, and marketing materials. Knowing exactly what you need will streamline your search and ensure you find vendors who can meet all your requirements.

RESEARCH POTENTIAL VENDORS

With your requirements in hand, start researching potential vendors. Use industry directories and exhibition associations to find reputable vendors. These sources often provide listings of those who specialise in exhibition services

and have a proven track record. Review vendor websites, portfolios, and case studies. A vendor's online presence can provide valuable information about their capabilities and previous work.

EVALUATE VENDOR EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

When you have a list of potential vendors, evaluate their experience and expertise in your specific industry. Check how long they have been in business and their familiarity with exhibitions like yours. Vendors with extensive experience are more likely to understand the nuances of your industry and deliver high-quality services.

Look for vendors with a proven track record of successful exhibitions. Ask for examples of past events they have worked on and the results they achieved. Vendors who can demonstrate success through client testimonials and case studies are more likely to meet your expectations.

ASSESS QUALITY AND RELIABILITY

Quality and reliability are paramount when selecting vendors. Request samples of their work or visit previous exhibitions they have serviced. Seeing their work first-hand can give you a better understanding of their capabilities and the quality of their services.

READ CLIENT TESTIMONIALS AND REVIEWS

Feedback from previous clients can provide insights into the vendor's reliability, professionalism, and ability to deliver on

promises. Look for consistent positive feedback and note any recurring issues that might be a red flag.

Check for industry certifications and awards. Certifications can indicate a vendor's commitment to maintaining high standards while awards can highlight their excellence and innovation in the industry.

REQUEST PROPOSALS AND QUOTATIONS

Once you have shortlisted potential vendors, ask for detailed proposals and quotations. Ensure the proposals include all aspects of the service such as costs, timelines, and deliverables. A comprehensive proposal will help you understand exactly what the vendor is offering and how it aligns with your needs.

Compare proposals based on value, not just price. While cost is important, it should not be the sole deciding factor. Consider the quality of services, the vendor's experience, and the added value they bring to your exhibition.

Selecting the right vendors for your exhibition needs involves understanding your requirements, thorough research, evaluating experience and expertise, assessing quality and reliability, as well as carefully reviewing proposals. By following these steps, you can ensure you choose vendors who will contribute to the success of your exhibition and create a memorable experience for all attendees. 4

THE BIG PICTURE

It's all in the small details!

2024/5/6 EVENTS CALENDAR



2 - 6 September 2024

Johannesburg
Expo Centre, Nasrec,
South Africa



8 - 11 March 2025

Johannesburg
Expo Centre, Nasrec,
South Africa



4 - 6 June 2025

Gallagher Convention
Centre, Johannesburg,
South Africa



3 - 5 June 2025

Gallagher Convention
Centre, Johannesburg,
South Africa



3 - 5 June 2025

Gallagher Convention
Centre, Johannesburg,
South Africa



3 - 5 June 2025

Gallagher Convention
Centre, Johannesburg,
South Africa



3 - 5 June 2025

Gallagher Convention
Centre, Johannesburg,
South Africa



22 - 24 July 2025

Durban Exhibition Centre,
Durban, South Africa



8 - 10 March 2026

Sandton Convention
Centre, Johannesburg,
South Africa



27 - 29 October 2026

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Trends in the AFRICAN Hospitality Industry



The African hospitality industry has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. A recent study by Moore Global delves into the current trends shaping the sector.

The Moore Global study on the African hospitality industry aimed to measure the resilience and adaptability of the sector amid various challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, economic fluctuations, and geopolitical instability. This study is part of the Hotel & Hospitality Confidence Index, conducted in collaboration with dmg events.

The survey involved participants from 17 African countries within the hotel and hospitality market, encompassing a diverse group of stakeholders such as suppliers, owners, operators, and tourism professionals. The study provided a comprehensive overview of the industry, highlighting trends, challenges, and perceptions shaping the sector.

Key objectives of the study included:

- **Technological Innovation:** Assessing the impact and adoption of AI and other technologies in enhancing customer experiences and operational efficiency.
- **Sustainability and ESG Initiatives:** Evaluating the importance of sustainable practices and their implementation across businesses.
- **Business and Leisure Travel:** Understanding the growing trend of

"bleisure" travel and its implications for the hospitality sector.

- **Financial and Operational Challenges:** Identifying the financial hurdles such as inflation and high input costs as well as exploring alternative financing options.
- **Labour and Skills Development:** Addressing labour shortages and strategies for staff training and retention.

Here are the findings of the study.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN HOSPITALITY

One of the most significant trends identified is the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI) and other technological innovations in the hospitality sector. It was revealed that 79% of survey participants are familiar with AI and its potential applications while 26% are extremely familiar with the concept. AI is being leveraged to enhance customer experiences, streamline operations, and address labour shortages. For instance, AI applications are being used to manage customer interactions, optimise energy use, and enhance security measures. Despite these advancements, the adoption of AI faces challenges such as cost, data privacy, and system integration.



SUSTAINABILITY AND ESG INITIATIVES

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives are becoming increasingly important in the hospitality industry. The results highlighted that 89% of businesses consider sustainable practices crucial for long-term success, though implementation remains inconsistent.

Only 46% of businesses have concrete sustainability measures in place. Those who have adopted ESG practices report positive impacts on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The use of renewable energy sources, such as solar power, has proven



effective in mitigating energy supply issues, enhancing operational performance, and improving the customer experience.

THE RISE OF BUSINESS AND LEISURE TRAVEL

Another significant trend is the rise of "bleisure" travel, where business trips are extended for leisure purposes. This trend has been bolstered by the increasing acceptance of remote work, allowing professionals to work from various locations. The survey indicated that 92% of respondents see bleisure travellers as a significant customer segment, which has led to increased occupancy rates and revenue-generation. To cater to this market, hotels are enhancing their offerings by improving Wi-Fi quality so creating versatile workspaces, and making rooms more work-friendly.

FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

The survey also addressed the financial and operational challenges faced by the industry. High inflation rates and rising input costs, particularly for food and energy, are major concerns. Additionally, high interest rates are prompting businesses to seek alternative financing options. Despite these hurdles, the industry remains optimistic. Many



businesses are adopting sophisticated revenue-management strategies, such as dynamic pricing and loyalty programmes, to optimise financial performance.

LABOUR AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Labour shortages, exacerbated by the pandemic, continue to challenge the hospitality sector. However, Africa's growing population presents an opportunity to address these shortages. Businesses are increasingly focusing on staff training, progressive employment policies, and programmes to enhance employee satisfaction and retention. More than half of the survey respondents have established initiatives to foster a supportive and work environment.

The African hospitality industry is navigating a complex landscape of challenges and opportunities. Technological innovation, sustainability, and the integration of business and leisure travel are driving the sector's evolution. While financial and operational hurdles persist, the industry's resilience and proactive strategies are paving the way for a positive future. The insights from the Moore Global survey underscore the importance of adaptability and forward-thinking in maintaining the sector's growth and success. 4

About Moore Global

The Moore Global network traces its origins back to a small auditing, tax consulting, and insolvency practice set up by Harold Moore and Albert Partridge in 1907. Moore, Partridge & Co. occupied a building not far from the Guildhall in the heart of the City of London, evolving steadily until the outbreak of war in 1914. By the end of the conflict, Albert Partridge had left and the business entered a new phase of growth.

In 1918, Harold Moore formed Moore, Stephens & Co with John Robinson Stephens, who had managed the firm while his new business partner served in the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War. The name was shortened to Moore Stephens in 1986 and then evolved again when the global network rebranded as Moore in 2019.

Whatever the name, a global outlook has always been part of their DNA. In 1921, the firm opened an office in Glasgow and established Moore, Cross & Co in Brazil a year later. Shortly afterwards, the firm started to develop close relations with the Greek shipping community, which continue to this day. The initial international push revolved around the need to meet specific shipping client requirements. Over time, these offices diversified to offer services to a wide range of industries.

In 1968, the Moore Stephens International network was formally established, and by 1979 there were member firms in most of the world's main economies. A third generation of the Moore family, Richard, took on the task of developing the network, becoming chairman of Moore Stephens International in 2004. He stepped down at the end of 2019, having seen through the successful transition to the Moore Global network.

Through all these changes, amid the rollercoaster of events of a turbulent century, Moore Global has never stopped growing its international footprint and developing its services.



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Karen Atherstone
MARKETING MANAGER
AFRICAN HILLS SAFARI LODGE & SPA

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Hospitality Junxtion Alliance is a full-service Sales & Marketing Representation company.

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Effective strategies for visitor engagement at your booth



An engaging booth attracts more visitors, allowing you to showcase your products or services effectively. This interaction not only raises brand visibility but also creates memorable experiences for attendees, fostering positive associations with your brand.

Effective engagement strategies can lead to higher lead generation and conversion rates, driving sales and business growth. By captivating visitors and addressing their needs directly, you build stronger relationships and gain valuable insights into customer preferences, setting your brand apart from competitors and ensuring a successful event.

PRE-EVENT PREPARATION: RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Effective visitor engagement starts with thorough research and planning. Identifying your target audience is crucial. Understand their needs, preferences, and pain points to tailor your approach accordingly. This targeted strategy ensures your booth appeals directly to potential clients, increasing the likelihood of meaningful interactions. Setting clear

goals and objectives for engagement helps measure success and provides direction for your efforts. Whether your aim is to generate leads, increase brand awareness, or showcase a new product, having specific targets will guide your planning and execution.

BOOTH DESIGN

An attractive and functional booth design is essential for capturing attention and facilitating engagement. A well-designed layout that incorporates your branding elements ensures that your booth is visually appealing and easily recognisable. Interactive displays - such as touchscreens, product demos, and multimedia presentations - can draw visitors in and provide hands-on experiences that are memorable and impactful. The design should also consider the flow of traffic and ensure there is enough space for visitors to comfortably explore your offerings.

STAFF TRAINING

Your booth staff are the frontline ambassadors of your brand, so their preparation is paramount. Equip your team with comprehensive product knowledge and effective engagement techniques to ensure they can answer questions confidently and engage visitors

Visitor engagement at booths is crucial for maximising the impact of your presence at trade shows and exhibitions.

meaningfully. Role-playing scenarios – as well as Q&A preparation - help staff practise handling various visitor interactions, from casual enquiries to detailed product demonstrations. Well-trained staff can create positive experiences, leave lasting impressions, and convert booth visitors into potential clients.

CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE BOOTH: VISUAL APPEAL

An attractive booth design is essential for capturing attention and drawing visitors in. Use vibrant colours, strategic lighting and clear signage to make your booth stand out. Incorporate multimedia elements such as videos and presentations to convey your message dynamically and engagingly.

INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

Interactive elements are key to maintaining visitor interest. Touchscreens, VR

experiences, and live demonstrations provide immersive and memorable experiences. Hands-on product-testing areas allow visitors to interact with your offerings directly, fostering a deeper connection with your brand.

COMFORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

Ensure your booth is comfortable and accessible to all visitors. Provide relaxed seating and maintain an open layout to accommodate traffic flow. Include accessibility features such as ramps and easy-to-navigate pathways to make your booth welcoming for everyone. A well-designed booth that prioritises visual appeal, interactivity, and comfort enhances visitor engagement, leaving a lasting impression and driving business success.

ENGAGING VISITORS: INITIAL INTERACTION

The first interaction sets the tone for visitor engagement. Ensure your staff is friendly and approachable, ready to greet visitors with a warm welcome. Quick and effective elevator pitches can capture interest immediately, providing concise yet compelling information about your offerings.

PERSONALISATION

Personalising interactions enhances visitor engagement. Tailor conversations to address individual interests and needs. Utilise visitor data to offer customised experiences, making each visitor feel valued and understood.

ACTIVITIES AND GIVEAWAYS

Engage visitors with fun activities and giveaways. Hosting mini-games or contests

can create excitement and draw in crowds. Providing branded merchandise and useful giveaways ensures visitors leave with a tangible reminder of your brand, fostering positive associations and encouraging future engagement.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY: DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Technology plays a crucial role in modern booth engagement. Utilise tablets and apps for seamless data collection and interaction. These tools can capture visitor information efficiently and offer interactive features to engage visitors in real time. Integrating social media allows for live updates and broader reach, encouraging online interaction and amplifying your event presence.

VIRTUAL REALITY AND AUGMENTED REALITY

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) provide cutting-edge, immersive experiences that captivate visitors. VR can transport attendees to virtual product demos or company tours, creating memorable, impactful interactions. AR can overlay digital information onto physical products, offering enhanced explanations and interactive features. These technologies showcase your products and services in innovative ways, making a lasting impression on visitors. By leveraging digital tools and immersive technologies, you can significantly enhance visitor engagement, driving interest and creating valuable connections.

POST-ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES: FOLLOW-UP

Effective post-engagement strategies begin with diligent follow-up. Collect

visitor contact information during the event to ensure you can maintain the connection. Sending personalised follow-up emails or messages shows visitors that their presence and interest were valued. Tailoring these communications to reflect specific interactions and interests can significantly enhance the likelihood of continued engagement and conversion.

FEEDBACK COLLECTION

Gathering feedback is essential for continuous improvement. Use surveys and feedback forms to solicit visitor opinions about their experience at your booth. This information is invaluable for identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Analysing feedback helps refine your engagement strategies, ensuring each subsequent event is more successful than the last.

BUILDING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Building long-term relationships with visitors extends beyond the event. Connect with attendees on social media and professional networks to keep your brand on their radar. Regular engagement on these platforms can nurture these relationships over time. Offering exclusive post-event content or special offers can incentivise visitors to stay connected and engaged with your brand. This approach not only fosters loyalty but also positions your brand as a valuable resource in their network.

Effective visitor engagement involves thorough pre-event preparation, creating an attractive booth, personalised interactions, leveraging technology, and robust post-engagement follow-up. These elements collectively ensure a memorable and impactful visitor experience. ⁴

Top 5 facts about effective visitor engagement at your booth

- 1. Pre-event preparation is key:** Conduct thorough research and planning to identify your target audience and set clear goals for engagement. Tailoring your approach ensures your booth appeals directly to potential clients, increasing the likelihood of meaningful interactions.
- 2. Design an attractive and functional booth:** A visually appealing booth with vibrant colours, strategic lighting, and clear signage captures attention. Incorporate

interactive elements such as touchscreens, product demos, and multimedia presentations to create memorable and engaging experiences for visitors.

- 3. Equip your staff for success:** Well-trained booth staff are crucial for effective visitor engagement. Ensure your team has comprehensive product knowledge and effective engagement techniques. Role-playing scenarios and Q&A preparation can help them confidently handle various visitor interactions.
- 4. Leverage technology for enhanced engagement:** Utilise digital tools like tablets

and apps for seamless data collection and real-time interaction. Incorporate VR and AR to provide immersive experiences that captivate visitors and showcase your products in innovative ways.

- 5. Implement robust post-engagement strategies:** Follow up with visitors by collecting contact information and sending personalised messages. Gather feedback through surveys to improve your engagement strategies continuously. Building long-term relationships through social media and exclusive content keeps your brand on visitors' radar.

Elevating THE EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

In the fast-paced, high-energy environment of exhibitions, selecting the right venues, exhibition stand builders, and suppliers is essential for creating memorable events. Wellness and relaxation zones have become crucial for successful event-planning.

The venue sets the tone for the entire event, making it a critical factor in the success of any exhibition. When selecting a venue, look for a location that offers ample space to accommodate attendees and exhibitors comfortably. Modern amenities such as high-speed internet, advanced AV equipment, and sufficient power outlets are essential for ensuring smooth operations and enhancing the overall experience. Accessibility is another key consideration. The venue should be easily reachable by various modes of transport and have facilities that cater to individuals with disabilities. Additionally, consider the venue's flexibility in accommodating different set-ups, from large exhibitions to smaller, intimate gatherings. The ability to provide areas for relaxation zones and wellness activities is also crucial as these spaces contribute significantly to

attendee well-being and engagement. A superbly-chosen venue not only supports the logistical needs of the event but also enhances the overall atmosphere, fostering a positive and memorable experience for all participants.

EXHIBITION STAND BUILDERS

Quality stand builders are essential for creating a visually striking and functional exhibition space. Selecting builders with a proven track record is crucial; their past work should demonstrate creativity, reliability, and the ability to deliver on time. Experienced stand builders understand the importance of brand representation and can design engaging and interactive stands that captivate attendees. These professionals can transform your ideas into reality, using innovative materials and techniques to enhance the visual appeal and practicality of your exhibition area. They should also be adept at maximising space,

ensuring that every square metre is utilised effectively to showcase products or services.

Interactive elements, such as touch screens or VR experiences, can further draw in attendees and create memorable interactions. By partnering with skilled stand builders, you ensure your exhibition space not only attracts attention but also facilitates meaningful engagement, ultimately contributing to the success of your event.

SUPPLIERS AND VENDORS

Reliable suppliers are the backbone of a smoothly run event. When vetting them, focus on their reliability, quality of products, and customer service. Start by researching their reputation and seeking testimonials from previous clients.

High-quality catering services that offer healthy food options can significantly enhance the attendee experience, ensuring that dietary needs and preferences are met. Similarly, audiovisual (AV) suppliers should provide top-notch equipment that supports clear communication and engaging presentations.

Reliable suppliers are punctual, responsive, and adaptable, able to handle last-minute changes or unexpected issues with

#EVENTADD-ONS

professionalism. Establishing strong relationships with trusted suppliers ensures that all event components, from food and beverages to technology and furnishings, are delivered and set up as required. This reduces stress and allows event organisers to focus on the overall experience rather than logistical concerns. Ultimately, selecting dependable suppliers contributes to a seamless event execution, leaving a positive impression on attendees and stakeholders alike.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Opting for venues and suppliers committed to sustainability is a critical aspect of modern event-planning. Energy-efficient venues not only reduce the environmental footprint but also often offer state-of-the-art facilities that enhance the attendee experience. Look for venues that implement green practices, such as recycling programmes, efficient lighting, and water conservation measures.

When choosing stand builders, prioritise those who use eco-friendly materials and sustainable construction practices. This not only supports environmental goals but also demonstrates a commitment to corporate social responsibility, which can be appealing to attendees and stakeholders.

Catering services should focus on minimising waste and prioritising local, organic produce. This can involve using biodegradable packaging, offering plant-based menu options, and sourcing ingredients from local farmers and producers. By selecting sustainable venues and suppliers, event organisers can create eco-conscious events that not only meet high standards of quality and functionality but also promote a greener future.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Modern exhibitions greatly benefit from incorporating the latest technology to enhance attendee engagement and overall event experience. When choosing a venue, ensure it offers robust Wi-Fi and reliable internet connectivity to support the high demand for online activities and digital interactions. Opt for suppliers who can provide cutting-edge tech solutions such as interactive displays, which can captivate and engage attendees, so making your exhibition stand out. Event apps are another valuable tool, offering features like real-time updates, personalised agendas, and networking opportunities, which can significantly improve attendee experience and convenience.

Virtual reality (VR) experiences add a futuristic touch, allowing attendees to immerse themselves in interactive and memorable simulations. These tech enhancements not only draw more attention ▶



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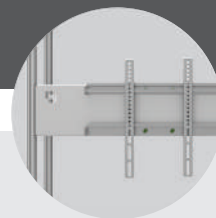
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but also facilitate deeper engagement and interaction, creating a more dynamic and appealing exhibition. By leveraging the latest technology, you can ensure your event is both innovative and impactful.

THE NECESSITY OF RELAXATION ZONES AT EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions are known for their intense schedules, with back-to-back sessions, meetings, and presentations. Attendees often find themselves on their feet for hours, navigating large venues, and engaging in numerous interactions. This can lead to fatigue, stress, and diminished concentration, ultimately affecting the quality of their participation. Relaxation zones provide a much-needed respite from this intensity, allowing individuals to take a break, rejuvenate, and return to the event with renewed energy and focus.

THE VALUE ADDED BY RELAXATION ZONES

Wellness and relaxation zones provide numerous benefits to attendees, making them an essential feature of modern exhibitions:

- **Physical and mental well-being:** Wellness and relaxation zones cater to the physical and mental well-being of attendees. Offering amenities like comfortable seating, quiet spaces, and access to water and healthy snacks helps in reducing stress levels and preventing burnout. Attendees who feel well-cared-for are more likely to engage fully with the event, participate in sessions, and network effectively.
- **Informal networking:** Relaxation zones create an informal setting where attendees can connect with one another organically. These areas facilitate casual conversations, leading to meaningful connections and collaborations that might not occur in more formal environments. The relaxed atmosphere encourages openness and fosters genuine interactions.
- **Boosted productivity:** Taking short breaks in a relaxing environment can significantly boost productivity and focus. When attendees have

the opportunity to rest and clear their minds, they return to the event with better concentration and a greater capacity to absorb information. This leads to a more effective and rewarding exhibition experience.

- **Enhanced event reputation:** By incorporating wellness and relaxation zones, event organisers demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of their attendees. This can enhance the event's reputation, making it more attractive to potential participants and exhibitors. A positive event experience can lead to higher attendance rates and increased loyalty among attendees.

CREATING EFFECTIVE RELAXATION ZONES

Chill-out areas should be equipped with comfortable seating like lounge chairs or bean bags that can be located in a quiet part of the venue, with soft lighting, calming music, and greenery to create a serene atmosphere. Incorporating wellness activities such as yoga sessions, massage stations, or meditation areas can help reduce stress and promote overall well-being, with flexible scheduling for attendees' convenience.

Offering healthy catering options - including organic, vegan, or gluten-free choices - ensures diverse dietary needs are met and promotes healthier eating habits with fresh fruit, smoothies, and herbal teas. Establishing technology-free zones encourages attendees to unplug and engage in face-to-face conversations, reducing stress and improving mental clarity. Additionally, designating quiet areas for mindfulness, complete with guided meditation recordings, mindfulness exercises, or a small wellness library, provides a tranquil retreat for attendees.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF RELAXATION ZONES

Incorporating relaxation zones significantly enhances the overall attendee experience by providing spaces for relaxation and recharging, leading to higher satisfaction rates and



positive feedback for event organisers. These zones boost attendee engagement as individuals return to the event with renewed energy and focus, resulting in more meaningful interactions during sessions and networking opportunities, benefiting exhibitors and speakers with a more attentive audience.

In addition, the inclusion of wellness activities and healthy catering options promotes both physical and mental health, enabling attendees to feel and perform better throughout the event, with lasting benefits that extend beyond the exhibition's duration. Furthermore, these areas can also foster a sense of community and well-being, encouraging attendees to connect on a more personal level and enhancing the overall atmosphere of the event.

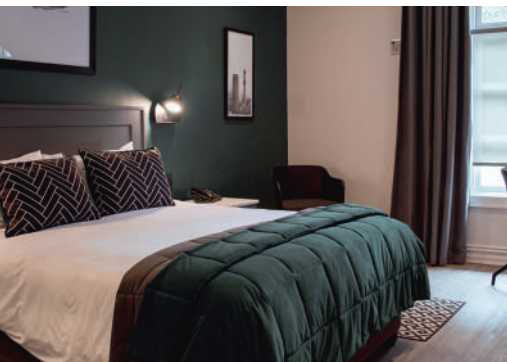
By focusing on essential elements such as the right venue, skilled exhibition stand builders, reliable suppliers, and incorporating relaxation zones, modern exhibitions can significantly enhance the attendee experience. The inclusion of these components not only supports the logistical needs of the event but also fosters a positive, engaging, and memorable experience for all participants. Prioritising sustainability and the latest technology further elevates the event, ensuring it meets high standards of quality and functionality while promoting a greener future. As event organisers continue to seek ways to improve the attendee experience, these best practices will set new benchmarks for successful and impactful exhibitions. ►

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Nestled in the picturesque Johannesburg suburb of Fourways, the 250 bedroom Indaba Hotel, Spa & Conference Centre stands as a paragon of excellence in the realm of conferencing. With a sterling reputation built on decades of dedicated service and continuous innovation, this venue has become synonymous with sophistication and efficiency, providing an ideal setting for a wide array of events.

The Indaba Hotel boasts an impressive 24 multi-purpose conference venues, each designed to cater to a broad spectrum of needs. From intimate Executive Boardrooms tailored for high-stakes business meetings to expansive Banquet Venues capable of accommodating up to 800 guests, the Indaba Hotel ensures that every event is executed with precision and flair.

One of the standout features of the Indaba Hotel is its versatility. The conference venues are designed with flexibility in mind, seamlessly adapting to various configurations to suit specific requirements. Whether it's a small

strategic meeting, a mid-sized seminar, or a grand gala dinner, the Indaba Hotel provides the perfect space to ensure that the event is not only successful but also memorable.

No conference is complete without exceptional catering, and the Indaba Hotel delivers on this front with aplomb. The culinary team offers a diverse range of menu options, from light refreshments to lavish banquet feasts, all prepared with the finest ingredients. Special dietary requirements are catered for with the same level of care and creativity, ensuring that every guest is satisfied.

In an era where the quality of the venue can make or break an event, the Indaba Hotel, Spa & Conference Centre stands out as a beacon of excellence. Its combination of versatile venues, cutting-edge facilities, exceptional service, and serene environment make it the premier choice for conferencing in Johannesburg.

The Indaba Hotel, Spa & Conference Centre is sure to meet all your business and leisure needs. We look forward to welcoming you to our oasis in the City!

CONFERENCE & BANQUET SEATING



	CINEMA	SCHOOL ROOM	U-SHAPE	BOARD ROOM	BANQUET	COCKTAIL	DINNER DANCE
Auditorium	244	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lecture Room 2-4	20	10	10	10	-	-	-
Lecture 5	-	-	-	10	-	-	-
Lecture Room 6	60	30	25	-	-	-	-
Lecture Room 7	80	60	40	-	-	-	-
Lecture Room 8	120	100	50	-	-	-	-
Lecture Room 9 - 12	30	20	20	20	-	-	-
Lecture Room 13	30	25	25	25	-	-	-
Lecture Room 14	30	20	20	20	-	-	-
Lecture Room 15 & 16	70	50	30	-	-	-	-
Executive Boardroom	-	-	-	24	-	-	-
Ingidini	200	120	50	-	120	150	100
Injabulo	600	350	-	-	450	500	400
Lethabo	180	120	50	-	100	150	-
Ndaba Palace	80	50	-	-	100	130	70
Kgotla	1000	600	-	-	750	850	700
Kgotla Boardroom 1	-	-	-	12	-	-	-
Kgotla Boardroom 2	-	-	-	12	-	-	-

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Gawk (Pty) Ltd leads the display solutions industry with innovative and sustainable products designed to enhance brand visibility and promote environmental responsibility. Specialising in the versatile Triga® system and secure Digiosk tablet enclosures, Gawk offers diverse indoor and outdoor display options. The Triga® system, known for its modular design and durability, simplifies exhibition and retail set-ups, while Digiosk ensures secure, stylish tablet integration for seamless interaction. Committed to sustainability, Gawk uses eco-friendly materials and green manufacturing practices, aligning with global environmental goals and appealing to conscientious consumers. In-house grand format printing, precision laser-cutting, and advanced finishing capabilities guarantee exceptional quality control and customisation, meeting the unique needs of clients across various industries.



Gawk provides comprehensive design and installation services, working closely with clients from concept to implementation to ensure exceptional results. As market demands evolve, Gawk continues to set industry benchmarks, offering innovative, eco-conscious display solutions that enhance brand presence and champion environmental stewardship.



Your oasis of serenity in the heart of the city

Located in the upscale suburb of Fourways, near Sandton's bustling business hubs, the Indaba Hotel, Spa & Conference Centre offers a serene and luxurious retreat. With 250 elegantly appointed rooms and numerous amenities, Indaba is a destination in itself.

The Chief's Boma Restaurant serves over 120 African-inspired dishes, offering a culinary journey from North African Moroccan cuisine to Cape Koeksisters and Melktert, along with a "Shisa Nyama" grill featuring a variety of game meats. Epsom Restaurant is known for its lavish buffet breakfast and excellent lunch selection, while Bistro 407 offers intimate, upscale dinners and exquisite wine evenings.

The Gin School at Indaba provides a two-hour masterclass where guests can distil their own bottle of gin, adding a unique, creative twist to their stay. Wine enthusiasts can enjoy sophisticated tastings at the



Indaba Tasting Room, showcasing different farms throughout the year. For relaxation, Mowana Spa offers a wellness sanctuary with a range of treatments to revive and rejuvenate. Indaba Hotel, Spa & Conference Centre blends business efficiency with country charm, ensuring an enriching and memorable experience for all guests.



FROM CONCEPT TO DISPLAY: GARONA'S EXPERTISE IN LARGE FORMAT



Garona Communications and Projects started operating in 2008 and have vast experiences in Marketing and Communications. Their strength is their capacity to provide a wide range of solutions under one roof as well as the prompt and responsive customer service. Garona prides itself in delivering complete solutions in exhibition displays, large-format printing, design, and branding services. Garona is an exhibition specialist in the areas of trade shows, conferences, export promotion, pharmaceutical exhibitions & conferences, agricultural shows and many other large format environments. They also provide numerous exhibition stands for the tourism sector. Their team of designers, printers, and exhibition specialists will take the time to provide you with the best solution, keeping in mind your objectives, budgets and the environment within which you are operating.

This year Garona has invested in a printing studio where they have purchased new machines including a 3.2m machine that allows printing on fabric and vinyl. They have also invested in a new wood-cutting machine to ensure that the quality of wood-work is of high standards.

Garona Communications boasts a substantial and highly capable team. Their dedicated group of professionals collaborates synergistically to deliver exceptional results and effectively meet our clients' needs.

Garona Communications and Projects won four of the following awards in the EXSA 2024 Exhibition and Events Awards:

- Best Stand Design Award Pavilion for Afrox at Electra Mining 2022
- Best Event Award for Festo at Festo Automation Expo 2023
- Association Award for Music and Lifestyle Expo 2023
- Best Event Award for Medium Event up to 350 people for Festo Automation Expo 2023



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A BRAND SYNONYMOUS WITH INNOVATION, INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM



Specialised Exhibitions, a division of Montgomery Group, offers one of South Africa's largest portfolios of trade exhibitions servicing a wide range of business-to-business sectors of the South African economy. With a proud heritage spanning over 55 years, Specialised Exhibitions remains the marketer's first choice time and again.

"Our continued success lies in our ability to look ahead, to embrace change and to move forward," explains Gary Corin,

Managing Director at Specialised Exhibitions. "It's in our culture, our DNA, to create a vibrant, energetic and innovative environment that instills confidence in exhibitors and keeps us at the forefront of our industry. Our Brand is synonymous with innovation, integrity and professionalism."

Montgomery Group is the UK's longest-running independent events' organiser, a fifth-generation, family-owned business with over 50 events and co-locates across 15 countries. Its purpose is simple: 'To serve our world, nurturing relationships and developing opportunities.'

Earlier this year, Specialised Exhibitions was delighted to be announced as the winners of four EXSA-LENCE Awards presented by the Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa (EXSA). The awards were for Best Organiser 2022 and 2023, Best Event/Expo 2022 for Electra Mining Africa 2022, Best Event/Expo 2023 for Securex 2023, and as a recipient of an Association

Award for Best Collaboration Large event/exhibition for Propak Cape 2023. At a different event, two ROAR Awards were presented to Specialised Exhibitions by the Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO) in the category 'Best Trade Exhibition Under 6 000m²'. Propak Cape received an award for Excellence in Marketing and PR, and Securex received the overall Category Winners award.

"We're looking forward to an exciting 12 months ahead with Electra Mining Africa taking place in September this year with over 850 exhibitors and an anticipated 30 000+ visitors. Then we'll be gearing up for Propak Africa in March next year, Securex and its co-locates in Frigair in June, and the KZN Industrial Technology Exhibition in Durban in July," concludes Corin. ⁴

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- Supply of brochure holders
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- Storage of exhibition stands



AAXO ROAR Awards celebrates excellence in the exhibition industry

The Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO) hosted its highly anticipated ROAR Awards ceremony on 29 February 2024 at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand, honouring the outstanding achievements in the exhibition industry.

The Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO) hosted its highly anticipated ROAR Awards ceremony on 29 February 2024 at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand, honouring the outstanding achievements in the exhibition industry. The event brought together industry leaders, innovators, and stakeholders to celebrate excellence and recognise the remarkable contributions made by individuals and organisations in the field.

The ROAR Awards, now in its fifth edition, continues to serve as a prestigious platform that acknowledges excellence, innovation and professionalism within the African exhibition industry. This year's awards saw an unprecedented level of participation and competition, highlighting the industry's resilience and commitment to delivering exceptional experiences despite challenging times.

After careful consideration by an esteemed panel of judges - including Irene Costa, Lia Marus, Sello Ramasepele, Antonio Brito, Jennifer Potter and Martha Geyser - the winners across various categories were announced, showcasing excellence in different aspects of exhibition management, design, marketing, and service delivery. Among the highlights of the evening were the following award categories and winners:

Best Trade Exhibition Under 6 000 m²

The Certificate of Excellence in Marketing and PR went to Propak Cape by Specialised Exhibitions. The certificate of Excellence in Operations went to Angola Oil & Power by Energy Capital & Power and the category award winner was Securex by Specialised Exhibitions.

Best Trade Exhibition Over 6 000 m²

The Certificate of Excellence was awarded to Big 5 Construct Southern Africa by dmg events and the award went to Enlit Africa by VUKA Group.

Best Consumer Exhibition Over 6 000 m²

Comic Con Africa by Mogull Media came out top in this category.

Best Trade and Consumer Exhibition Under 6 000 m²

The Certificate of Excellence went to Frame Week Africa by RX Africa and the award went to Decorex Cape Town by RX Africa.

Best Trade and Consumer Exhibition Over 6 000 m²

The Certificate of Excellence was awarded to Rand Show by Dogan and the award went to Decorex Johannesburg by RX Africa.

Exhibition Stand of the Year

The Certificate of Excellence was awarded to House of Task by House of Task and the Best Stand Build went to Console Connect by Scan Display.

Outstanding Contribution to the Industry

- Tiiisetso Tau, Managing Director of Sydney Business Events,
- Devi Paulsen-Abbott, Chairperson of the Association of African Exhibition Organisers and CEO of Energy Capital & Power,
- Justin Hawes, Managing Director of Scan Display, and
- Projeni Pather, immediate past-Chair of the Association of African Exhibition Organisers and Managing Director of Exposure Marketing.

Service Supplier of the Year

The Certificate of Excellence went to Expo Guys and the winner for best supplier was GL Events.

Best Social Media Campaign

Mogull Media won this award for Comic Con Africa.

Best SA Launch Event

Mogull Media won this for Comic Con Africa.

Best Digital Campaign

The award was given to Frame Week Africa by RX Africa.

Best PR Campaign

RX Africa PR Team was awarded this for Decorex.

Best Venue

Gallagher Convention Centre was awarded this prestigious award.

Most Promising Rising Star/Young Professional

Boitumelo Poee, from Scan Display, netted this coveted award.





The ROAR Awards have once again highlighted the incredible talent and innovation within the African exhibition industry. These awards not only celebrate success but also inspire future growth and development. By recognising the hard work and dedication of individuals and organisations, the ROAR Awards foster a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. ⁴



The importance of industry awards to propel growth by Devi Paulsen-Abbott, AAXO Chair

According to international statistics, the impact of winning business accolades is staggering – small businesses can witness a remarkable 63% surge in operating income, while their larger counterparts experience a substantial 48% increase. These compelling statistics underscore the transformative power of actively pursuing awards, proving that the journey to acclaim is a direct route to a more robust bottom line.

Recognising excellence in the industry

Industry awards go a long way to acknowledge and celebrate extraordinary achievements, playing a pivotal role in showcasing the relevance and impact of an industry. Despite some overlooking their significance, awards provide a valuable platform for enhancing income, recognising top contributions, innovation and growth.

Awards and events present the latest trends, innovations, and solutions in their respective sectors, highlighting the key stakeholders and prospects to propel the industry forward. The ROAR Awards are

more than mere accolades; they recognise the exceptional work and contributions of individuals and companies, inspiring others to strive for brilliance. Securing business awards from reputable third parties significantly contributes to establishing a brand as a reliable entity that consistently delivers on its promises, while enabling business opportunities.

Fostering networking and collaboration

Through industry awards, a unique networking opportunity exists, bringing together leading professionals, decision makers, and key players. Awards promote and raise awareness of advancements made in an industry, from successful projects to initiatives and breakthroughs, showcasing momentum. This boosts collaboration, idea-sharing, and potential partnerships, ultimately driving progress and growth

Enhancing credibility and trust

Top events and awards showcase the best practices and standards upheld by

various organisations and individuals. These serve as a testament to committing to positive change and excellence. Receiving a prestigious award further fosters a sense of appreciation for hard work and dedication, which can boost morale at a company as well as elevate its reputation. The validation that comes from prestigious awards also creates a perceived value that allows brands to position their offerings at a premium, reinforcing the notion that quality work deserves a higher price point.

These factors benefit a business beyond retaining customers, reaching suppliers, vendors, and investors who actively peruse award ceremonies for potential business collaborations. Such achievements build towards a better continent, attracting key local and international stakeholders.

In essence, industry awards may seem like a simple recognition but they are an indispensable component in showcasing the positive impact and development of Africa. They promote solid working relationships, ultimately contributing to building a trusted reputation for the industry as a whole.

Celebrating EXCELLENCE

The EXSA-llence Awards 2024
not only celebrated achievements
but also highlighted significant industry trends.

On 18 January 2024, the Exhibition and Events Association of Southern Africa (EXSA) hosted the highly anticipated return of its annual industry awards. Held at CedarWoods of Sandton, the 'Out of Africa'-themed evening recognised and celebrated the high standard of 'EXSA-llence' that the industry achieved in 2022 and 2023.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENING

The EXSA chairperson, Sibusiso Mncwabe, said, "My highlight of the evening came from past chairpersons and other invited associations congratulating EXSA on one of the best EXSA Awards thus far. This is obviously due to the amount of work behind the scenes by Lee-Ann Alder, EXSA's association manager, and the board, as well as the members who want to see EXSA succeed.

"We saw our membership drop during and straight after COVID-19 but to see these numbers of attendees back and submitting beautiful work to be judged was heartwarming. The awards were won by a diverse group of companies, really showing that we have plenty of excellent companies ready to work hard for the industry. This also shows that, despite the difficult times, EXSA is still going strong and that our members are still

passionate about the organisation. This is a testament to the hard work of Lee-Ann and the board, as well as the dedication and enthusiasm of our members. "We are grateful for the ongoing support and we are excited to see what the future holds for us. We believe that with the right resources and dedication, EXSA can reach even greater heights. A big thank you to the sponsors for believing in the awards and to the members for attending and dressing to the theme."

MEET THE JUDGES

Five industry stalwarts were given the unenviable task of judging close to 200 EXSA award entries. They are Simon Aubrey, a freelance exhibition and events specialist; Sean Bailey of 180 Degree Digital; Lorin Bowin-Peterson of Lorin Bowin Business Events; Sonya Stoltz-Emmett of StrucMAC; and Doug Rix of DK Design. The Green Awards were judged independently by the Event Greening Forum (EGF).

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

The Chairman's Award, chosen annually by the EXSA chairperson, recognises one individual for their passion and dedication in uplifting the industry. In 2022, Liam Beattie from HOTT3D was honoured while Kerry-Lee Bester from Brilliant Branding received the award in 2023.

EXSA's Hall of Fame celebrates individuals who have made significant contributions to advancing and improving the industry over the years. The 2024 inductees are Chad Botha from Inspire Rentals, Mike Morris from New World Exhibitions, Moses Nefale from Scan Display, Liam Beattie from HOTT3D, Kerry-Lee Bester from Brilliant Branding, and Jack Smit from Brandex.

CELEBRATING CUSTOM-BUILT EXCELLENCE

For the 2022 awards, the winners in the custom-built exhibition stands category were as follows: 1UP for Babor at AMACSA (12 m² and under), The Exhibitionist for



Spotlight on industry innovation and sustainability

The EXSA-llence Awards 2024 not only celebrated achievements but also highlighted significant industry trends:

- **Innovation in Event Technology:** This year saw a surge in the adoption of cutting-edge technology in exhibitions, from virtual reality experiences to advanced event management software, enhancing attendee engagement and operational efficiency.
- **Focus on Sustainability:** Beyond the Green Awards, numerous participants showcased their commitment to eco-friendly practices. Examples included sustainable materials for stands, reduced carbon footprints, and recycling initiatives, setting new standards for the industry.

- **Training and Development:** Many award-winning companies emphasised the importance of continuous professional development, offering training programmes and workshops to upskill their teams and stay ahead in the competitive landscape.
- **Community Impact:** Several exhibitors and event organisers launched initiatives to give back to the community, including educational programmes, local employment opportunities, and charitable partnerships, demonstrating the industry's broader social responsibility.

The EXSA-llence Awards 2024 highlighted the industry's dedication to innovation, sustainability, and community, reinforcing its pivotal role in shaping the future of exhibitions and events in Southern Africa.



CrowdStrike at ITWEB Security (12 - 24 m²), Brilliant Branding for Drizit at Electra Mining (25 - 50 m²), Umtunzi for Moscow at IATF (51 - 100 m²), Brilliant Branding for Spec Cast at Electra Mining (101 - 200 m²), and Umtunzi for Mulotec at Electra Mining (200 m² and larger). Garona, representing AfroX at Electra Mining, won the Pavilion category. Brandex's event for Africori, Umlando Music Video, won the best small event (up to 100 attendees) while Scan Display's work for Investing in African Mining Indaba took the best large event (over 350 attendees).

In the 2023 awards, winners in the custom-built exhibition stands category included The Exhibitionist for CrowdStrike at ITWEB Security (12 m² and under), HOTT3D for Khusela Energies at Windaba (12 - 24 m²), HOTT3D for OADC at Africa Tech Festival (25 - 50 m²), 1UP for Alstrom at Africa Rail (51 - 100 m²), Happinest for Disney+ Africa at Comic Con (101- 200 m²), Brilliant Branding for Landocor at the SASOP Congress (200 m² and larger), and jane+paul for Hyve Events at Africa Oil Week (200 m² and larger). Expo Guys, representing Dega Expo Team - Germany at Africa Rail, won the Pavilion category while Brilliant Branding's work for DP World Hospitality Marquee at the Nedbank Golf Challenge took the Outdoor category. The Exhibitionist's Private Investors Dinner event won the best small event (up to 100 attendees), Garona's

Automation Expo for Festo won the best medium event (101-350 attendees) and Brandex's Spar Sales Conference won the best large event (over 350 attendees).

RECOGNISING GREEN INITIATIVES

The Green Awards recognised Chat'r Xperience for the Exxaro Sustainability Summit 2023 as the Best Green Event, and Brilliant Branding for Landocor at the SASOP Congress as the Best Green Exhibition Stand.

The Member Awards, voted for by EXSA members, honoured Brandex as the Best AV and Production company for both 2022 and 2023, and Exhibition Freighting GSM as the Best Logistics Company for both years. GL Events was named the Full-Service Contractor for 2022, while Scan Display took the title for 2023.

The CTICC was awarded Best Venue in 2022, with Joburg Expo Centre winning in 2023. Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery was recognised as the Best Organiser for both years, Electra Mining was named Best Event/Expo for 2022, and Securex won for 2023. Octanorm and Inspire Rentals were named Best Suppliers in 2022, while Barmotion and Urban Tonic won in 2023.

CELEBRATING COLLABORATIVE EXCELLENCE

The new Association Awards recognise exhibitions or events where EXSA collaborated and worked on various

aspects. The Music and Lifestyle Expo 2023 - organised by Synergy Business Events with infrastructure by Garona, Two Way and Scan Display, audiovisual support by Brandex, and hosted at the Sandton Convention Centre - won the award for the Best Collaboration Large Event/Exhibition. The same award for ProPak 2023 went to the organiser Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery, with infrastructure by GL Events, health and safety by Lodge Security, cleaning services by ZF Cleaning Services, logistics by Exhibition Freighting GSM, venue by CTICC, and registration by Tixsa.

The Event of the Year 2022 was Brandex's Umlando Music Video for Africori, and the Exhibition of the Year 2022 was Brilliant Branding's stand for Drizit at Electra Mining. For 2023, the Event of the Year was Garona's Automation Expo for Festo, and the Exhibition of the Year was HOTT3D's stand for OADC at Africa Tech Festival.

The EXSA-llence Awards 2024 successfully highlighted the exceptional achievements within the exhibition and events industry, reinforcing the resilience, innovation, and dedication of its members. As the industry continues to grow and evolve, the awards serve as a testament to the hard work and passion driving the sector forward, ensuring a bright future for exhibitions and events in Southern Africa. 4

Sustainability TRENDS IN THE EXHIBITION INDUSTRY



LEE-ANN ALDER is the association manager for the Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa (EXSA).

ANTHEA BUYS is the office manager at The Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO)

In a recent roundtable discussion, representatives from The Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO) and the Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa (EXSA) highlighted the growing emphasis on sustainability in the industry, noting that the shift towards eco-friendly practices is being driven from all sides.

The conversation revealed that organisers, venues, and suppliers are collectively striving to adopt more sustainable methods, recognising the need for environmental responsibility. This unified approach is evident in the increasing use of reusable materials and the implementation of practices that minimise waste and promote sustainability across the board.

CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIONS

The discussion also addressed the unique challenges faced by the exhibition industry in South Africa, particularly the infrastructural and economic constraints that can hinder sustainable efforts. However, it was noted that both large and small exhibitions are making significant

strides in adopting sustainable practices. Smaller exhibitions often find it easier to implement these changes but larger exhibitions are also setting new standards by prioritising sustainability despite the added complexities. The importance of education in promoting sustainable practices was emphasised, highlighting the evolving methods of constructing and managing exhibitions to align with environmental goals.

UNIQUE TRENDS IN AFRICA

The roundtable shed light on the unique trends emerging in the African exhibition space, where quality over quantity is becoming a primary objective. African exhibitions are increasingly focusing on delivering high-quality experiences with limited resources. South African stand builders are highly regarded

for their attention to detail and innovative approaches.

The discussion highlighted the significant impact of knowledge transfer and the role of South African companies in training and collaborating with suppliers across the continent. This collaborative effort is fostering sustainable practices and enhancing the overall quality of exhibitions in Africa.

THE FUTURE OF EXHIBITIONS POST-COVID

Looking ahead, the participants expressed optimism about the growth and evolution of the exhibition industry post-COVID. They noted that the industry is experiencing a resurgence, with exhibitions reaching and even surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

"The conversation revealed that organisers, venues, and suppliers are collectively striving to adopt more sustainable methods, recognising the need for environmental responsibility."

The pandemic has also prompted the industry to think creatively and find more economical ways to achieve results, leading to increased collaboration among organisers, venues and suppliers. This collaborative model is seen as essential for the future, ensuring that exhibitions are

About AAXO

AAXO was established as a collective platform to represent the exhibition organiser industry at large by promoting growth and development while addressing the industry's challenges. Its efforts are directed towards its mission of being the respected authority and representative of the exhibition-organising industry responsible for governance, skills development, and research while upholding world-class industry standards. This, in turn, is designed to be the engine that drives African exhibition and organiser growth.

The organisation includes exhibition organisers across a range of trade, consumer, and conference-driven exhibitions, namely Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery, Messe Munchen SA, Reed Exhibitions, Spintelligent, Terrapinn,

SA Confex Services, TE Trade Events, Exposure Marketing, Agri Expo, Synergy Business Solutions, Media 10, dmg Events, Agri Expo, Foundation for Professional Development, and Velocity Vision. With the wealth of knowledge and experience brought to the association by these organisations, AAXO has the energy and expertise to address the unique challenges and needs faced by organisers, giving them a powerful and credible voice. AAXO aims to promote the industry, encourage investment and participation in exhibitions, as well as provide members with the tools and resources to run successful exhibitions. This includes introducing a code of conduct that is fair, ethical and offers remedy and confidentiality; running training programmes that improve the



outcome of exhibitions; mediating disputes fairly and with sensitivity; conducting research to provide organisers and exhibitors with growth and business opportunities; engaging with government for greater recognition of the industry; and networking with relevant conference and exhibition bodies to share issues. Through these and all other activities, AAXO strives to represent all its members with honesty and integrity, providing them with guidance and leadership.

not only successful but also sustainable and innovative.

The roundtable discussion underscored the importance of sustainability in the exhibition industry and the collective efforts required to achieve it. By adopting eco-friendly practices, focusing on quality, and fostering collaboration, the industry is well positioned to meet the growing demand for sustainable and impactful exhibitions.

The future of the exhibition industry looks promising owing to its strong emphasis on environmental responsibility and innovation, which aligns with the growing global demand for sustainable practices and cutting-edge solutions, ensuring the industry remains relevant and impactful. 4

About EXSA

EXSA, the Exhibition and Event Association, was founded in 1980 as a non-profit organisation and serves as a passionate and committed platform to help industry members connect, engage, learn, and grow.

Their core strategy is to grow and develop the exhibition and events industry within Southern Africa. They achieve this by promoting the unique marketing benefits offered by exhibitions and events as well as raising the profile of our members, which include venues, organisers, and suppliers.

EXSA enables connections through the networking and communication of

their forums and via their website (www.exsa.co.za). In addition to providing EXSA's directory of members with an exhibitions calendar, and a news feed, the EXSA website also offers a wealth of knowledge and industry guidelines available to its members.

EXSA is also a proud member of the international body UFI, as well as the South African Event Greening Forum (EGF), IAEE (USA), AOE (UK) and ESSA (UK).



EXPO SHORTS

The INS and OUTS of the exhibitions industry



MEETINGS AFRICA: Sparking collaboration and sustainability efforts

Meetings Africa 2024 once again affirmed its stature as the continent's premier platform for the business events sector. Hosted in Sandton, Johannesburg, the event attracted over 380 exhibiting companies from 22 African nations and drew in 371 international, regional, and local buyers.

The event emphasised sustainable tourism, artificial intelligence (AI), and professional development, highlighting Africa's capacity to host world-class events.

Newcomers like Paul Chibwe from Willch Travel and Tours in Zambia and Baityr Diaw from the Mangalis Group of hotels in Côte d'Ivoire praised the event's seamless organisation and valuable networking opportunities.

Minister Patricia de Lille emphasised Africa's readiness to host large-scale events, while South African Tourism CEO Nombulelo Guliwe announced a partnership with the Event



Greening Forum (EGF) to evaluate sustainability efforts. South Africa's Tourism Deputy Minister Mahlalela highlighted the event's role in fostering innovation and knowledge-exchange within the tourism sector. Additionally, the Sustainability Village promoted local goods and environmental responsibility, reflecting the event's commitment to sustainable practices. The event also featured

numerous workshops and panel discussions, providing attendees with insights into the latest trends and strategies in event-planning, sustainability, and technology integration. These sessions offered valuable opportunities for learning and professional growth, further solidifying Meetings Africa's position as a crucial event for industry professionals. [4](#)

WTM AFRICA 2024: SHATTERING RECORDS AND SIGNALLING A SURGE IN AFRICAN TOURISM

World Travel Market Africa (WTM Africa) concluded its 2024 edition with unprecedented attendance, showcasing a significant spike in global interest in African travel and tourism. The event saw a 40% increase in buyers from the previous year, attracting 705 exhibitors and 5 752 industry professionals from 99 countries.

Strong representation from emerging markets such as Greece, the Philippines, Switzerland, Singapore, Lithuania, New Zealand, Ghana, China, Japan, and Argentina contributed to a record-setting 10 505 pre-scheduled meetings. The inaugural African Media Awards recognised exceptional journalism in tourism, while the Responsible Tourism Awards honoured organisations committed to sustainable travel practices.

Carol Weaving, Managing Director of RX Africa, emphasised the event's success and



commitment to driving innovation in the African tourism sector. The introduction of the African Journalism Awards and Brain Box sessions underscored WTM Africa's dedication to elevating the travel industry. The event also included a series of high-profile keynote speakers and panel discussions, where industry

leaders shared their insights on the future of tourism in Africa, the importance of digital transformation, and strategies for sustainable growth. This comprehensive programme ensured that attendees left with a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the African tourism industry.



A DAY AT SAITEX, AFRICA'S BIG 7 AND HOTEL AND HOSPITALITY EXPO: A FUSION OF FLAVOURS AND IDEAS

SAITEX, Africa's Big 7 and the Hotel and Hospitality Expo brought together a vibrant blend of food, business, and hospitality under one roof at the Sandton Convention Centre. The event showcased a diverse array of international participants and provided a platform for township entrepreneurs to shine.

Africa's Big 7 featured a celebration of food from around the world, with chefs participating in competitions and demonstrating their culinary skills. SAITEX provided a platform for township entrepreneurs to showcase their products, focusing on practical solutions for business challenges.

The Hotel and Hospitality Expo highlighted suppliers to the hospitality industry, featuring luxurious linens, fine furniture, and gourmet food products. The event also included insightful seminars and workshops that addressed key issues facing the hospitality industry, such as sustainability, innovation in service delivery, and the impact of emerging technologies. These sessions provided valuable knowledge and networking opportunities for attendees, helping them to stay ahead in a competitive market. [4](#)



SOUTH AFRICA'S ESTEEMED Woman of Stature Awards 2024

The Woman of Stature Awards recognised the dedication and passion of female entrepreneurs and business leaders across diverse industries in South Africa. Esteemed for its rigorous selection process, the award symbolises a hard-earned honour, supported by an audited nomination procedure to maintain its credibility.

In 2024, the Woman of Stature Awards saw an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm, with over 200 nominations from across South Africa. Each candidate underwent thorough scrutiny, leading to the announcement of a record 87 nominees. These outstanding women then embarked on a transformative journey filled with networking opportunities and workshops aimed at bolstering their capabilities and inspiring profound empowerment. The path to finalist status involved a stringent adjudication

process, with each category evaluated by three distinguished judges, ensuring fairness and integrity monitored by the auditing firm MGI RAS. This meticulous selection culminated in the announcement of the exceptional finalists for the 2024 awards, marking a significant milestone in their professional journey.

The Woman of Stature Awards 2024 culminated in a dazzling Gala Dinner on 13 April at the Indaba Hotel, celebrating achievement across categories including CEO of the Year, Entrepreneur of the Year, and Woman in Technology.

Charlotte du Plessis, CEO of the Woman of Stature Awards, emphasised the power of these awards to foster a more equitable and prosperous society. "Empowering and celebrating the achievements of women is crucial," she asserted, "for paving the way for future generations to flourish and make an indelible impact globally." [4](#)

AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA 2024: Kicking off with excitement

Africa's Travel Indaba 2024 commenced on a high note at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre, with delegates eager to do business. The event served as a platform for tourism professionals from across Africa and around the world to network, showcase their products and services, and discuss industry trends. The event promoted Africa as an attractive destination, fostering business partnerships and driving sustainable tourism development. Enhanced engagement sessions and networking

opportunities were a focal point, with Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille highlighting the continent's unlimited potential.

Approximately 1 261 exhibitors from 25 African countries and over 1 000 buyers from 55 countries participated, with Guinea and Eritrea as new additions. KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube noted the event's contribution to the province's GDP, highlighting its economic significance. The event also featured a variety of cultural showcases and entertainment, providing attendees with a taste of Africa's rich heritage and diversity. These performances not only added to the vibrancy of the event but also reinforced the message of Africa as a unique and desirable travel destination. [4](#)

Harnessing big data to customise events for optimal engagement

Harnessing big data is essential in modern event planning, offering insights into attendee preferences, behaviours, and demographics.

Big data is vital in event-planning, offering insights into attendee preferences, behaviours, and demographics. This allows organisers the opportunity to customise events, enhancing engagement through personalised agendas and tailored marketing. By leveraging big data, planners create targeted, efficient, and impactful events, leading to higher satisfaction and better outcomes for all involved.

UNDERSTANDING BIG DATA IN EVENT-PLANNING

'Big data' refers to the massive volume of structured and unstructured data generated daily. In event-planning, this includes diverse types of data such as attendee demographics, preferences, and behaviours. Demographic data helps understand the audience's age, gender, and location. Preference data reveals interests and expectations, while behavioural data tracks interactions and engagement patterns. By analysing these data types,

event planners can gain valuable insights to tailor events, improve attendee experiences, and make informed decisions. The scope of big data in event-planning is vast, encompassing everything from initial registration to post-event feedback.

COLLECTING DATA FOR EVENTS

Data collection methods for events include surveys, registration forms, social media, and mobile apps. These tools gather valuable information about attendee preferences and behaviours.

Ethical considerations and data privacy are paramount. Organisers must ensure data is collected transparently and securely, complying with regulations like GDPR and POPIA. Real-time data collection during events is crucial for making immediate adjustments and enhancing attendee experiences. This live feedback allows organisers to respond to attendee needs promptly, improving engagement and satisfaction. By balancing effective data collection with ethical practices, event planners can harness insights while respecting privacy and building trust with their audience.

ANALYSING DATA TO GAIN INSIGHTS

Tools like AI, machine learning, and analytics platforms are essential for analysing event data. These technologies help identify key metrics and trends, allowing organisers the opportunity to translate insights into actionable strategies. By leveraging these tools, planners can optimise event experiences, enhance engagement, and achieve better outcomes.

CUSTOMISING EVENT CONTENT

Personalising agendas and sessions based on attendee interests is crucial for optimal engagement. By analysing data from registration forms, surveys, and social media interactions, event organisers can understand what topics and activities resonate most with their audience. This allows them to create customised agendas that cater to specific interests, ensuring attendees find the event valuable and relevant.

Tailoring content-delivery methods is another key strategy. Whether through workshops, seminars, or interactive sessions, different formats can cater to various learning styles and preferences,



Key points on harnessing big data to customise events for optimal engagement

- **Understanding Attendees:** Utilise demographic, preference, and behavioural data to tailor event experiences.
- **Data Collection:** Use surveys, registration forms, social media, and mobile apps while ensuring data privacy and ethical considerations.
- **Real-Time Adjustments:** Collect real-time feedback to make immediate event improvements and enhance attendee satisfaction.
- **Technological Integration:** Employ AI, machine learning, and analytics platforms to gain insights and personalise content.
- **Future Trends:** Embrace IoT, blockchain, and advanced analytics for more connected, secure, and efficient events.

By leveraging big data, event planners can create highly personalised and engaging experiences, leading to greater attendee satisfaction and event success. Continuous innovation and improvement are crucial for staying competitive in the evolving event industry.

making the content more accessible and engaging. Interactive sessions, in particular, encourage participation and can significantly enhance the attendee experience.

Using data to select relevant speakers and topics ensures the event addresses the most pertinent issues and interests. By identifying trending topics and popular speakers through data analysis, organisers can curate a programme that not only attracts attendees but also keeps them engaged throughout the event. This targeted approach results in a more impactful and event experience.

ENHANCING ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE

Creating personalised communication and marketing strategies involves using data to tailor messages to individual attendees, increasing relevance and engagement. Customising event logistics - such as seating arrangements, catering preferences, and accessibility needs - ensures a comfortable and inclusive experience for all participants. Real-time adjustments based on attendee feedback and behaviour allow organisers to address issues promptly and enhance satisfaction. By monitoring interactions and responses during the event, organisers can make immediate changes that improve the overall experience, demonstrating attentiveness and commitment to attendee needs. This approach ensures a more engaging, responsive, and successful event.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR DATA-DRIVEN ENGAGEMENT

Event management software and mobile apps streamline planning and enhance attendee engagement by offering features like scheduling, reminders, and personalised content. Interactive tools - such as live polls, Q&A sessions,

and feedback forms - encourage active participation and provide valuable insights. Virtual and hybrid event platforms expand reach and accessibility, allowing remote attendees to participate in real time and interact with in-person participants. These technologies create a dynamic, engaging event experience, fostering greater involvement and satisfaction. By leveraging these tools, organisers can deliver seamless, interactive, and inclusive events that cater to diverse audience needs.

FUTURE TRENDS IN BIG DATA AND EVENT CUSTOMISATION

Emerging technologies like IoT, blockchain, and advanced analytics are revolutionising event-planning. IoT enables seamless connectivity and real-time data collection, so enhancing attendee experiences. Blockchain offers secure and transparent transactions, improving trust and data integrity. Advanced analytics provide deeper insights into attendee behaviour and preferences, enabling precise customisation. These technologies collectively drive the evolution of

data-driven event-planning, making it more efficient and impactful. Predictions for the future include increased use of AI for personalised experiences, more robust security measures with blockchain, and smarter, more connected events through IoT, leading to higher engagement and satisfaction.

Harnessing big data for event customisation offers numerous benefits, including enhanced attendee engagement, personalised experiences, and improved event outcomes. By understanding attendee preferences and behaviours, organisers can tailor every aspect of the event, from agendas to marketing strategies. This leads to higher satisfaction and a more impactful event.

Continuous improvement and innovation are essential to stay ahead in the dynamic event industry. By regularly incorporating new technologies and data-driven insights, organisers can consistently deliver exceptional experiences, adapt to changing needs, and maintain a competitive edge, ensuring long-term success and growth for their events. ⁴

TIPS FOR EXHIBITION

AND EVENT PLANNERS TO MAXIMISE THEIR NETWORKING

Networking is a cornerstone of success in the exhibition and event-planning industry, fostering connections, collaboration and growth.

Effective networking helps event planners build relationships with potential clients, suppliers, and industry peers so, enhancing their professional network. These connections can lead to new business opportunities, innovative ideas,

and valuable partnerships. Networking also provides insights into industry trends and best practices, allowing planners to stay competitive and deliver exceptional events. By leveraging their network, event planners can access resources, support, and expertise, ultimately improving their business outcomes and career development.

NETWORKING ON THE EXHIBITION FLOOR: PREPARATION IS KEY

Effective networking begins with thorough preparation. Research attendees and exhibitors in advance to identify key individuals and organisations that align with your goals. This allows you to tailor your approach and set clear networking objectives, such as building partnerships, generating leads, or gaining industry insights.

ENGAGE ACTIVELY

When at the exhibition, approach booths confidently and initiate conversations. Engage actively by asking insightful questions that demonstrate your interest and knowledge about their offerings. Show genuine curiosity and listen attentively to their responses, which helps build rapport and trust.



FOLLOW-UP

Collect contact information from the people you meet to ensure you can continue the conversation after the event. Following up is crucial. Send personalised messages that reference your conversation, express appreciation, and suggest potential next steps. This not only reinforces the connection but also lays the groundwork for future collaboration. By combining thorough preparation, active engagement and diligent follow-up, you can maximise your networking efforts and achieve meaningful results.

NETWORKING WITHIN YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Building strong relationships with colleagues and team members is essential for a cohesive and productive work environment. Encourage open communication and collaboration to foster a sense of trust and teamwork. Hosting internal events - such as team-building activities and workshops - can further strengthen these bonds. These events create opportunities for informal networking, allowing team members to connect on a personal level, share ideas and collaborate more effectively. By prioritising internal networking, you can enhance team dynamics, boost morale and improve overall organisational performance.

NETWORKING WITH SUPPLIERS

Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with suppliers is vital for successful event-planning. Understand your suppliers' needs and expectations to ensure a mutually beneficial partnership. Regular communication and updates keep the relationship transparent and responsive, allowing for timely adjustments and collaboration.

NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Approaching negotiations with a win-win mindset fosters trust and creates long-term partnerships. Aim for agreements that benefit both parties, ensuring that the supplier feels valued and respected. Building trust through fair negotiations and consistent reliability strengthens the foundation of the partnership.

ATTENDING INDUSTRY EVENTS

Enhance your supplier relationships by inviting them to industry events and

exhibitions. This shared experience allows for deeper connections and better understanding of each other's business needs. Co-hosting events with suppliers can further strengthen these partnerships, showcasing a united front and mutual commitment to excellence. By integrating suppliers into your networking strategy, you can create robust, collaborative relationships that drive success in your events.

LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PLATFORMS

Engaging on professional networks like LinkedIn is essential for expanding your reach and connecting with key industry players. Actively participate by sharing posts, commenting on others' content, and reaching out to make new connections. Joining industry-specific groups and forums can further enhance your network, providing access to discussions, resources and opportunities tailored to your field.

SHARING VALUABLE CONTENT

To position yourself as a thought-leader, regularly post industry insights and updates. Share articles, whitepapers, and relevant news that demonstrate your expertise. Highlighting successful events and collaborations can showcase your skills and achievements, so attracting potential clients and partners. This approach not only builds your personal brand but also fosters trust and credibility within your network.

VIRTUAL NETWORKING

Virtual networking has become increasingly important. Participate in webinars and virtual events to stay connected and informed about the latest industry trends. These platforms offer opportunities to learn, share knowledge, and engage with a wider audience. Engage with attendees through online platforms by asking questions, joining discussions, and following up with connections made during these events.

DEVELOPING A NETWORKING STRATEGY: SETTING CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Effective networking begins with setting clear objectives. Define what you want to achieve through networking, whether it's building partnerships, generating leads, gaining industry insights, or expanding your professional network. Having specific

goals helps you stay focused and make the most of your networking efforts. Identify key individuals and organisations that align with your objectives. Research their backgrounds, interests, and potential value to your network, so you can approach them with relevant and engaging conversations.

TRACKING AND MEASURING SUCCESS

To ensure your networking efforts are fruitful, keep a record of new contacts and follow-ups. Use a CRM system or a simple spreadsheet to track details such as names, contact information, notes from your conversations, and any agreed-upon next steps. This organised approach helps you manage your connections and maintain consistent communication. Evaluate the impact of your networking activities on business growth by analysing metrics such as the number of new contacts made, follow-up responses, and successful outcomes like collaborations, partnerships, or new business opportunities. Regularly assess these metrics to understand what strategies are working and where improvements are needed. By setting clear objectives - as well as systematically tracking and measuring success - you can optimise your networking efforts, leading to more meaningful connections and tangible business growth.

Key networking tips for exhibition and event planners include thorough preparation, active engagement, and diligent follow-up. Build strong relationships with colleagues, suppliers, and attendees, leveraging professional networks and sharing valuable content.

Continuously set clear objectives and track your progress to ensure effective networking. Consistent networking efforts are essential for staying connected, gaining industry insights, and fostering long-term partnerships. By maintaining an active and strategic approach to networking, event planners can enhance their professional growth, drive business success, and ensure they remain relevant in the dynamic event planning industry. ►



YOUR ULTIMATE NETWORKING CHECKLIST

Research attendees and exhibitors

Identify key individuals and organisations to connect with. Review their backgrounds, interests, and recent achievements.

Set clear networking goals

Define what you want to achieve (e.g., building partnerships, generating leads, gaining industry insights). Create specific, measurable objectives. Prepare your pitch.

Develop a concise and compelling elevator pitch

Highlight your unique value proposition and set measurable objectives.

Gather essential materials

Ensure you have enough business cards. Prepare marketing collateral, brochures, and promotional materials.

At the event dress professionally

Choose attire that reflects your brand and makes a positive impression.

Plan your schedule

Identify key sessions, presentations, and networking events to attend. Allocate time for spontaneous networking opportunities.

Prepare questions

Develop a list of insightful questions to ask attendees and exhibitors. Focus on questions that demonstrate your interest and knowledge.

Engage actively

Approach booths and initiate conversations confidently. Show genuine curiosity and listen attentively to responses.

Utilise social media

Share your event experience on LinkedIn, Twitter, and other platforms. Use event hashtags and tag relevant individuals.

Post-event follow-up: Collect contact information

Ensure you gather business cards or digital contact details from the people you meet.

Send personalised follow-up messages

Reference your conversation and express appreciation. Suggest potential next steps or future meetings.

Evaluate your goals

Assess whether you achieved your networking objectives. Identify areas for improvement and plan for future events.

Ongoing networking: Stay connected

Regularly engage with new contacts on social media. Share valuable content and updates relevant to your network.

Review and reflect

Keep a record of successful networking interactions and strategies. Continuously refine your approach based on feedback and experiences. 4



10 FAST FACTS ABOUT EXHIBITION SAFETY AND SECURITY

Effective safety measures prevent accidents and disruptions, fostering a secure environment. This enhances attendee confidence, encourages participation, and helps maintain the event's reputation, ultimately contributing to its overall success.

1 PRE-EVENT RISK ASSESSMENT

Conducting a thorough pre-event risk assessment is vital for exhibition safety as it enables organisers to identify potential hazards and plan effective mitigation strategies, so preventing accidents and ensuring a secure environment.

2 SECURITY PERSONNEL

Conducting a thorough pre-event risk assessment is vital for identifying potential hazards and planning effective mitigation strategies to ensure exhibition safety and a secure environment.



3 ACCESS CONTROL

Developing an emergency response plan is critical to ensuring swift actions during any crisis. Additionally, training staff and exhibitors on these procedures ensures coordinated and effective responses.



4 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Developing an emergency response plan as well as training staff and exhibitors on emergency procedures are critical to ensuring swift and coordinated actions during any crisis.



5 CROWD MANAGEMENT

Effective crowd management techniques are essential for maintaining order and ensuring safety. These include using barriers to guide the flow of people and clear signage to provide directions. Additionally, employing crowd control staff helps monitor and manage the situation effectively.



6 SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING

Surveillance systems, such as CCTV and on-site monitoring, are crucial for maintaining security. They provide continuous oversight and enable quick response capabilities.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

Ensuring compliance with local health and safety regulations is essential for a secure exhibition environment. It is equally important that all exhibitors adhere to these safety standards. This not only guarantees legal compliance but also enhances the overall safety of the event.



8 FIRE SAFETY

Implementing fire safety measures and equipment, along with conducting fire drills and training for staff and exhibitors, is crucial for preventing and effectively responding to fire emergencies.



9 CYBERSECURITY

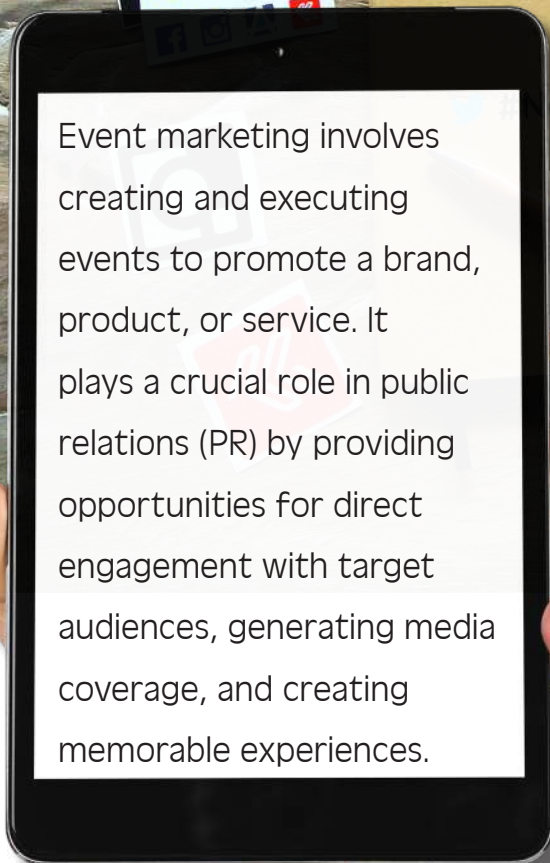
Protecting digital information and systems from cyber threats is essential. Implementing robust measures ensures the security of both attendee and exhibitor data. These precautions safeguard sensitive information and maintain the integrity of the event.

10

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Effective communication during emergencies is crucial, requiring reliable tools and protocols to maintain clear communication channels and ensure swift, coordinated responses.

Safety and security at exhibitions are paramount for ensuring a positive attendee experience and successful event outcomes. Effective measures - such as thorough pre-event risk assessments, trained security personnel, controlled access, and robust emergency preparedness - create a secure environment. [4](#)



Event marketing involves creating and executing events to promote a brand, product, or service. It plays a crucial role in public relations (PR) by providing opportunities for direct engagement with target audiences, generating media coverage, and creating memorable experiences.

EVENT MARKETING AS A PR TOOL

Integrating event marketing into PR strategies is essential for enhancing brand visibility and credibility. Events allow brands to connect personally with their audience, build relationships, and foster loyalty. Through strategic-planning and execution, event marketing can drive significant engagement, attract media attention, and amplify a brand's message. Ultimately, event marketing is a powerful PR tool that elevates brand visibility, nurtures valuable relationships, and stimulates active audience participation, ensuring a more impactful and lasting presence in the market.

DEFINITION AND KEY ELEMENTS OF EVENT MARKETING

Event marketing is the strategic process of planning and executing events to

promote a brand, product, or service. Key elements of event marketing include goal-setting, audience identification, creative concept development, and effective promotion.

Types of events used in marketing encompass trade shows, conferences, product launches, experiential events, and corporate meetings. Each type serves different purposes, such as showcasing new products, engaging with industry peers, or creating brand experiences.

The connection between event marketing and public relations (PR) is profound as events provide an excellent platform for direct interaction with the target audience, so generating buzz and media coverage. Through well-executed events, brands can enhance their visibility, establish credibility, and foster relationships with both customers and the media. Event marketing, therefore, is an integral part of PR strategies, enabling brands to convey

their message effectively and create lasting impressions in the minds of their audience.

ENHANCED BRAND VISIBILITY

Event marketing significantly enhances brand visibility by reaching wider audiences through various types of events. These gatherings attract diverse participants, expanding the brand's reach beyond its regular customer base.

Events also generate media coverage and publicity, amplifying the brand's presence and credibility. Building relationships and networking are key benefits of event marketing. Events provide opportunities to connect with industry influencers, media representatives, and potential customers, fostering new partnerships and strengthening existing relationships with stakeholders.

Driving engagement and interaction is another crucial aspect. Events create

memorable experiences that resonate with attendees, making the brand more memorable. By encouraging direct interaction with the brand through activities, demonstrations, and personal engagements, events allow participants the opportunity to experience the brand firsthand. This direct engagement fosters a deeper connection, enhancing brand loyalty and trust. Ultimately, event marketing is a powerful tool for enhancing visibility, building relationships, and driving meaningful interactions.

SETTING CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Setting clear objectives is crucial for successful event marketing. Defining specific goals - such as increasing brand awareness, generating leads, or building relationships - provides direction and ensures the event's success.

Target audience identification is equally important, involving a deep understanding of the demographics, preferences, and interests of the target audience to tailor the event accordingly. Creative event concepts play a vital role in engaging attendees. Designing unique and interactive experiences ensures the event stands out and resonates with participants.

Leveraging digital tools enhances event promotion and management. Social media platforms, email marketing campaigns, and event apps are essential for reaching a broader audience, facilitating communication, and streamlining event logistics. These tools enable real-time updates, attendee engagement, and efficient event coordination. By setting clear objectives, identifying the target audience, developing creative concepts, and utilising digital tools, event marketers can create impactful and memorable events that achieve their strategic goals.

PRE-EVENT PR ACTIVITIES

Effective event marketing involves comprehensive PR activities at every stage. Pre-event PR activities are essential for generating buzz and interest. This includes distributing press releases and conducting media outreach to inform journalists and publications about the upcoming event.

Social media teasers and targeted email campaigns create anticipation and attract attendees. During the event, onsite PR activities play a crucial role in maximising engagement. Engaging with media representatives onsite ensures coverage

5 Tips for reaching out to the media

1. **Craft a Compelling Press Release:** Write a clear, concise, and engaging press release highlighting the key points of your event or news.
2. **Personalise Your Outreach:** Address journalists by name and reference their previous work to show you've done your homework.
3. **Use Multiple Channels:** Email is essential but consider following up with a phone call or connecting on social media to ensure your message is received.
4. **Provide Clear Contact Information:** Ensure your press release includes contact details for a spokesperson who can provide additional information or interviews.
5. **Follow Up:** If you don't hear back, follow up politely after a few days to reinforce your message and offer any further assistance.

and facilitates interviews. Live streaming and real-time social media updates allow remote audiences to participate, extending the event's reach.

Post-event PR activities are vital for maintaining momentum and showcasing success. Issuing post-event press releases and securing media coverage highlight the event's achievements. Sharing event highlights and success stories on social media and blogs helps to maintain interest and engagement, reinforcing the brand's message. By implementing these PR activities, event marketers can enhance visibility, engagement, and overall impact.

MEASURING SUCCESS AND ROI ANALYSIS

Measuring the success of event marketing involves tracking key performance indicators (KPIs). Media mentions and coverage are essential KPIs, indicating the event's visibility and reach in the public domain. Social media engagement and reach metrics - such as likes, shares, comments, and follower growth - reflect the event's impact on the digital audience. Attendee feedback and satisfaction, gathered through surveys and direct interactions, provide insights into the event's effectiveness and areas for improvement.

ROI analysis is crucial for evaluating the return on investment from event marketing efforts. This involves calculating the financial gains relative to the costs incurred. Beyond immediate financial returns, assessing long-term benefits


- such as enhanced brand loyalty and reputation - is essential. A successful event can significantly boost brand perception, leading to sustained customer loyalty and positive word of mouth. By analysing KPIs and ROI, businesses can determine the overall effectiveness of their event marketing strategies and make informed decisions for future events.

Event marketing is a vital tool in public relations, providing unique opportunities to enhance brand visibility, build relationships, and drive engagement. By creating memorable and impactful experiences, events help brands connect personally with their audience, fostering loyalty and trust. Integrating event marketing into PR strategies ensures that the brand message is conveyed effectively, generating media coverage and public interest.

To leverage event marketing for PR success, businesses must focus on strategic-planning and execution. This includes setting clear objectives, identifying target audiences, and designing creative event concepts. Utilising digital tools for promotion and management, engaging with media representatives, and sharing event highlights are essential for maximising impact.

Event marketing not only enhances PR efforts by creating buzz and visibility but also strengthens relationships and builds a positive brand reputation. By continuously innovating and adapting to emerging trends, brands can ensure their event marketing efforts remain effective, driving long-term success and growth. ⁴

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION: INTRODUCING THE AAXO YOUTH CHAPTER



The Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO) invites individual members to join the Youth Chapter Committee for the AAXO Youth Chapter.

Africa boasts the world's youngest population, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30. This significant youth demographic in Africa presents a growth opportunity for the continent, which can be realised by ensuring youth inclusion in decision-making processes and providing suitable opportunities for work and innovation. Recognising the critical contributions made by the youth to the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) sector across Africa, the Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO) is proud to launch the AAXO Youth Chapter, an exciting new forum for members dedicated to empowering the young voices within the industry.

CALLING ALL YOUNG INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

This initiative calls upon AAXO members aged between 18 and 35 (defined as 'Youth' in the South African National Youth Policy) who have at least two years of industry experience and are employed at an AAXO member organisation to join the committee, with the aim of providing a platform for the industry's youth to voice their perspectives.

"The main objective of the AAXO Youth Chapter is to empower our industry's future leaders by offering a platform for their voices to be heard. In order to address the needs of this important demographic effectively, we believe it is crucial to involve youth input and participation. "That is why we are thrilled to announce the formation of a Youth Chapter Committee, responsible for spearheading relevant initiatives and activities within the chapter. Through this committee, we hope to create a dynamic and engaging space for the next generation to share their ideas and perspectives while paving a path towards a more inclusive and successful events and exhibitions industry," says Devi Paulsen-Abbott, Past Chairperson of AAXO.

WHY JOIN THE AAXO YOUTH CHAPTER COMMITTEE?

Members are encouraged to seize the opportunity to express their innovative ideas and engage in meaningful discussions about industry challenges with their peers. By joining the AAXO Youth Chapter Committee, they can expand their professional network and enhance their visibility within the industry. This exceptional opportunity will enrich their experience with a role that showcases their commitment and contributions to the MICE industry.

The AAXO Youth Chapter represents a pivotal step towards fostering inclusivity and innovation within the MICE industry. By providing a platform for young professionals to voice their ideas and perspectives, AAXO is not only investing in the future of the industry but also ensuring that it evolves to meet the needs and aspirations of the next generation. We encourage all eligible members to take advantage of this unique opportunity to make a lasting impact on the industry, expand their professional networks, and contribute to a more dynamic and successful exhibition sector. Join us in this exciting journey towards empowering the future leaders of the MICE industry.

AAXO introduces new 2024/2025 board

The Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO) introduced its new 2024/2025 board during its Annual General Meeting. The board includes Chair Gary Corin, Vice-Chair Projeni Pather, and Treasurer James Bull, along with other distinguished members.

In 2023/2024, AAXO focused on revitalising the exhibitions industry, forging strategic partnerships, and promoting sustainability. The new board aims to continue these efforts, emphasising youth development, sustainability, and global recognition of the African events sector. They plan to attract diverse young talent, ensure supply chain reliability, and market exhibitions as catalysts for economic growth. ⁴



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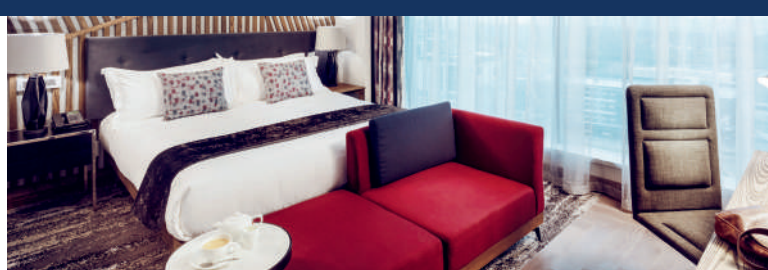
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