

2023 Road Freight Summit debuts successfully

The recent 2023 Road Freight SME Summit, held for the first time at the Maslow Hotel in Sandton, covered topics that met the needs of the small fleet owners in attendance and the broader trucking sector.

The summit covered a range of topics relevant to small fleet owners, including critical success factors, safety and compliance, the transportation of mining commodities, industry trends on effective and efficient fleet management, and securing funding in South Africa.



Source: chandlervid85 via [Freepik](#)

Many industry specialists, topic experts, government department heads, and academia occupied the high-level speaker platform with the likes of Mark Makhubalo - CEO of MLM Logistics; Kgomotso Selokane - chairperson Transport Sector B-BBEE Charter Council; Jonathan Mphake, national fleet manager at SBV; the eminent Prof Nick Binedell; Gavin Kelly, CEO of The Road Freight Association; and, Musa Ndlovu – national secretary of the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry, to mention a few.

Rirhandzu Mashava, deputy director general: Integrated Transport Planning at the Department of Transport (DOT), gave the keynote address, pointing out that 90% of the more than 100,000 businesses active in the road freight sector are SMEs. They had a significant impact on the economic landscape, she said.

"These SMEs are not merely businesses; they are job creators and contributors to the national economy. The Summit's primary focus is to provide an enabling platform for these SMEs to scale up and take their businesses to the next level."

"Small and medium-sized enterprises have a responsibility to scale up and take their business to the next level," added Makhubalo.

SME road freight businesses

JC Auditors' managing director, Oliver Naidoo said that a primary focus of the Summit was raising awareness of safe systems as a key building block for SME road freight businesses. "If we are to address South Africa's poor road safety record, there is a need for impactful initiatives to promote safe and compliant fleets on our roads."

Michelin's B2B sales director, Charle Lensley steered the Michelin Connected Fleet team to highlight how its fleet management services and solutions could benefit SMEs in road freight by reducing costs, improving sustainability, increasing security and boosting safety.

Mashava also highlighted opportunities created by technology. "The rise of technology and digital platforms has provided SMEs in the road freight sector with enhanced opportunities for growth and success.

"Digital platforms enable them to streamline operations, optimise routes, and offer real-time tracking and customer support. This allows SMEs to compete effectively with larger established companies and provide efficient and reliable services to their clients."



Source: Supplied

Managing Director of SME company Atarah Solutions, Lehlohonolo Mpshe said of the Summit: "Frank talk, insightful, enjoyable, thought-provoking - and commitments were made."

Sinethemba Cobo of Isuzu Motors said the Summit made him appreciate the company's support for the sector and re-evaluate how he influences change. He added: "These are the platforms that SMEs require to connect, work together and make a difference."

Annah Ngxeketo CEO of Mamoja Trading & Projects, found the conversations with industry leaders "insightful", noting the key learning was to "have a collaborative spirit with other SMEs".

Musundwa concluded: "We express enormous gratitude to our stakeholders and the commitment shown by the number of

SMEs who attended. We take this as a sincere vote of confidence to run the event again in 2024 – indeed, a number of stakeholders have already pledged their support for our 2024 Road Freight SME Summit."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>