

Sustainability, technology key for construction

By  Nicci Botha

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Even though the South African building and construction industry is in the doldrums, with [not much growth expected](#) in 2016, sustainability and technology will continue to be trend growth points, not only locally but worldwide, this year.

1. Sustainability

Green remains the number one bestseller. This is backed up by the [World Green Building Trends 2016 report](#) by Dodge Data & Analytics, which says that more than 60% of the respondents' projects would be green by 2018, with a doubling from current projects across the Middle East, North Africa, Asia, South America and sub-Saharan Africa.



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In addition, the largest percentage of green building activity continues to be in the commercial building segment, comprising 46% of respondents' future green building projects.

2. Green certification

A by-product of the sustainability revolution is that construction companies and developers are not only seeking out products and processes that comply with green specifications, but also certification that their practices are sustainable through [green-star ratings](#) by the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA).

In addition, the GBCSA committed to introducing a [net zero/positive building certification scheme](#) by 2020 at the COP21 conference held late last year.

3. Technology rules

Today and in the future, building and construction is far more than mere bricks and mortar with the growing influence of technology.

According to blog [Whirlwind Steel](#): "The construction industry was slow to jump on the technology bandwagon but its sure making up for it now. From construction management software programs to smartphone apps that make it easy - and instantaneous - to access communication, photos, plans, details and so on - even small builders are taking advantage of

this trend. Perhaps one of the most universally appreciated innovations is building information modelling (BIM), which provides 3D representations, facilitating project managers and crews as they assess risks and plan the most efficient way to scaffold and stage jobsites."

4. Tiny living

One very interesting trend emerging in the States is the [Tiny House Movement](#), which includes micro-apartments that provide affordable living in densely populated cities, as well as independent tiny homes that are built on mobile trailers and installed on a piece of property for just a fraction of the price of a typical single family home.

The movement's [website](#) says this social trend is: "A result of environmental concerns, financial concerns, and the desire for more time and freedom. For most Americans 1/3 to 1/2 of their income is dedicated to the roof over their heads; this translates to 15 years of working over your lifetime just to pay for it, and because of it 76% of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck."

Working towards a greener environment, while harnessing the possibilities that technology has to offer in terms of design, security and administration will be the focus of the building and construction industry in 2016.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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