

The integration of tech at events

South Africa is often seen as lagging behind the global curve. In the technology space, for example, the country has often been considered about five years behind developed countries. As Industry 4.0 revolutionises the digital workplace, however, a global shift is reducing the gap between markets across industries. The South African events industry is one which has, in many ways, exceeded global standards.

The recently held Middle East Special Event and Exhibition Show (MESE) featured more than 30 live seminars, hosted by more than 40 expert speakers addressing over 2,000 event professionals and 100 suppliers from 32 countries. Key topics revolved around developing the event of the future, embracing technology and artificial intelligence (AI) to revolutionise events, and creating excellent visitor experiences and enhanced engagement.



Following MESE, held in Dubai, event experts evaluated the latest competing solutions and trends in the events industry and found South Africa to be well ahead of the curve.

“As we considered the global trend to integrate technology into show experiences - to use technology to create a best in class visitor experience - we noted that the innovations presented were already in play locally,” confirmed Janyce Dalziel, chief executive officer of Currin’t Events.

“As was explained at the MESE event, we’ve moved from a culture where delegates are asked to switch off their mobile devices, to telling them to turn their phones on and engage,” adds Kim Currin, Currin’t Events event director. She agrees, however, that the message should still be the main focus.

“A fine balance is required to integrate tech and innovation, without overshadowing the true focus of the event.”

Across the country, forward-thinking events coordinators are already incorporating AI and innovative applications to enhance guest experiences.

“From driving greater guest engagement to interactive agendas, digital breakaway sessions and information centres it is clear that events are evolving as the industry embraces digital transformation,” says Dalziel.

While the ‘wow’ décor, light shows, bots and drone technology enhance the visual aspect of the event, the basics are also augmented.

“When guests enter with ease through a digitally driven registration system, are empowered to engage, vote or give feedback online, or can listen to different tracks in one exhibition hall on silent headphones, the entire event experience is enhanced,” states Currin.

From monitoring and analysing attendee data for effective crowd shaping, to creating seamless experiences with strategic AV, embracing bots and social media, and influencing event production worldwide through innovative and a ‘be the best’ approach, the local event industry is achieving it all.

“The South African events industry must continue evolving to stay ahead of the curve,” concludes Dalziel.

“We must continuously ask ourselves; ‘What does it take to create a world class show and what impact will it have on the future of entertainment in the region?’. It is clear that we aren’t behind in this sector – the scale and quality of our local events are of world-class standard.”

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