

New construction conference opens PR company's year

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The announcement late last year of Litha Communications as the conference, event and exhibition organiser for the inaugural conference of the SACPCMP (South African Council for Project Management and Construction Management Professions) to be held 11-12 April 2013 at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand, rounded off a highly successful year for the PR and events company.

"It was a good year, despite the industry's challenging economic circumstances, and reflects the reputation and ability of the company to deliver first-class events and PR interventions," says Teresa Jenkins, MD of Litha Communications.

"This new conference, announced by the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Jeremy Cronin, sets the tone for 2013, in which we expect to expand our private sector conferencing expertise in line with the highly successful public sector events we managed in 2012. These included the Govan Mbeki Human Settlements Awards and the launch by Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale and Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane of the Jabulani Housing Project in Soweto.

"Of interest was our engagement with foreign companies, such as the mega-launch of the FAW truck at Soccer City, on behalf of FAW China and our initial encounter with the Tiens group. We plan to expand this network in 2013, as South Africa becomes the focus of BRICS interest.

PR section offers risk management training

"On the PR side, we continue to offer reportage services for conferences, utilising our freelance journalists' network to provide plenary and split-session feedback, which gives clients an electronic report that can be used as a guide in implementing decisions taken, such as the international Early Childhood Conference held early in 2012. This kind of reporting is highly complex and necessitates the use of experienced writers who are able to extract the relevant facts from the overall presentations and produce a succinct report., as opposed to a recorded session, which is usually difficult to listen to for extended periods.

"We began a blog that offers other conferences, events and exhibitions organisations access to our years of experience and knowledge gained in such subjects as risk management. In 2013, we plan to offer short, dedicated risk management courses for events planners at our new offices in Johannesburg.

"In the wake of tragedies, such as the one at the Linkin Park concert in Cape Town, we feel that we need to share our knowledge more freely, particularly for organisers within companies, whose main task is not events management. We will be using our contracted Certified Meetings Professional (CMP®), Gwen Watkins, to run these courses.

Staff development

"Sindile Rubushe, our business development manager, was chosen as a volunteer for the Vodacom Change the World Campaign - our loss but a substantial gain for the community, as he served them for the whole of 2012.

"Our CEO, Andile Ncontsa, was appointed programme manager of the newly formed Climate Hero Awards Africa, which opened for entries in September 2012 and closes on 1 August 2013. This continental award extends the current South African competition to celebrate achievements that reflect enduring impact, innovation, long-term vision and leadership in responding to the challenges of climate change on the African continent.

"All our staff went through a six-month PR and communication training programme, facilitated by an expert in the field, and the value of that can be seen in the improvement in communication.

"An exciting addition is Sonia Merolia, who brings a Master degree in both biology and environmental studies, reflecting the deep felt values of the company, its commitment to sustainability and its dedication to the protection of the environment.

AWHF book scheduled for early 2013

Finally, yet importantly, is the news that the African World Heritage Fund's (AWHF) coffee table book will be launched and distributed at the African Mining Indaba at CTICC in February 2013. This immense labour of love has kept a portion of our team busy for most of the last six months, as it gathered information on the extraordinary wonders of the World Heritage Sites in Africa and collated them into a pictorially riveting glossy publication.

Designed as a corporate gift to enhance the reception area of any company that supports the environment and cultural heritage of Africa, we are proud of our involvement in this project and look forward to more such projects in 2013," concludes Jenkins.

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