Startup finalists ready themselves for DEMO Africa

Africa's top tech entrepreneurs are putting the finishing touches on their presentations to investors from around the world at this week's DEMO Africa showcase.

Demo Africa 2016 Finalists with mentor Stephen Ozoigbo.

The pan-African platform serves to connect Africa's top tech entrepreneurs to the global market. This year saw 723 entrepreneurs from across 27 African countries apply to take part in DEMO Africa. Of these, 30 finalists, stemming from nine countries, were chosen to present their businesses to investors and buyers at the two-day conference.

DEMO Africa says it is committed to the sustainability and continued growth of its finalists; as such the DEMO Africa Boot Camp was launched to help these entrepreneurs reach their full potential. Harry Hare, executive director of DEMO Africa, explained: "The DEMO Africa Boot Camp is a continuation of an online mentoring and coaching process we have in place for the finalists." The online programme runs for four weeks, and is concluded with the two-day Boot Camp taking place in Johannesburg in the run-up to DEMO Africa 2016.

Business preparation

The process of mentoring and coaching is vital for many of these entrepreneurs, says Hare. "Our experience has shown us that the DEMO Africa finalists are at different development and maturity levels within their businesses. A lot of them are also technically-minded rather than business-minded, so we refine them to think more about their business and what they are offering to investors," he explains.

The online course and Boot Camp prepares the finalists to not only have a clear strategy for their six-minute presentation to a room full of investors, but also enables them to talk confidently to anyone who approaches them during the conference: investors, buyers and even the media.

"The Boot Camp is designed to help the entrepreneurs present to people who want to put money in their businesses," says Hare. "Our finalists are technical people, but they are going to be talking to people who are not as technical, and they need to learn how to do that." Hare also says it is important for entrepreneurs to have all the necessary information at their fingertips including metrics, financial figures and short- to medium-term projections for their businesses.

DEMO Africa 2016 is hosted by the City of Johannesburg and sponsored by the South African Department of Science and Technology, LIONS@frica, Microsoft, Intel and Google. The conference will take place from 25 to 26 August 2016 at the Sandton Convention Centre. For details on how to register visit DEMO Africa website.

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