

# Faster, smarter and increasingly ingenious!

By  Karen Ashwin

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Operating in a world where clients are seeking slick solutions to their business challenges implies raising the bar on all fronts. Tight budgets call for ingenious solutions - a convergence of smart finances, ingenious creativity, impeccable logistics, brilliant execution and client service which WOWs. In short, clients need turnkey solutions service providers to make their lives easier and produce results which make them look phenomenal!

## 1. Brands rule

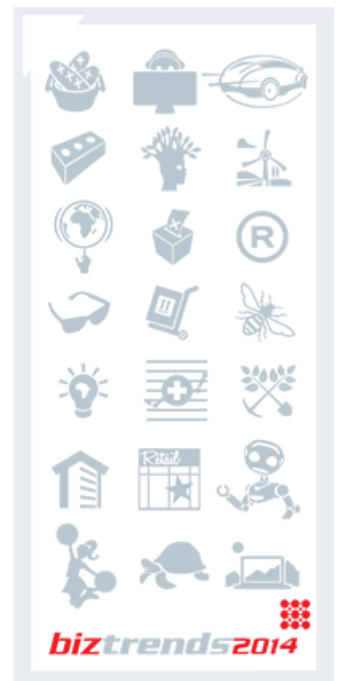
When talking marketing strategy, the ultimate purpose of an event is to engage a specific target market for a specific purpose in a customised brand activation. Therefore, strong brand positioning and messaging will remain key to the *raison d'être* of activations across the spectrum.

All events - from mall activations to gala banquets - are anchored by the brand and every single touch point is utilised to reinforce this. Brands are the golden thread weaving together every element of an event - making for a powerful impact and a memorable (brand) experience.

## 2. Ever more focused and relevant

Events are set to remain the most significant and powerful - if costly - tool to facilitate face-to-face communication. While face time via cyberspace is an option, nothing will ever take the place of real time, physical interaction between marketers and their audiences. The costs of staging impactful events dictates that they are extremely focused in terms of relevance to the audience, so that there is little, if any wastage in terms of effort, budget and resources.

Attention and care will be paid to attracting and engaging the right people in the most appropriate way in order to achieve the desired outcome.



## 3. Corporate governance, ethics, social responsibility

Aside from achieving sustainable financial results, companies are increasingly impacted by the concept of triple bottom line reporting - planet, people and profitability. As clients in the corporate space become increasingly bound by strict adoption and adherence codes of ethics, governance and corporate social responsibility, these issues shift into the event conceptualisation and production process.

## 4. Sustainability

Ever increasing awareness of sustainability issues remains key in the event space. The green consciousness and methodology is becoming firmly established as the only way to do business in the global arena. Managing, minimising, measuring and offsetting the carbon footprint and impact of events is now part of the entry level agenda worldwide.

## 5. Technological edge

Efforts to work increasingly smarter, more efficiently and more creatively dictate the increasing utilisation of leading edge technologies to achieve this. Mobile apps, the utilisation of social media, electronic registration, diary planning, business card scanning and interactive devices utilised during meetings makes for more efficient operations, excellent record-keeping, database management and research.

## 6. Social media

The world of social media is constantly evolving and is set to remain a powerful communications tool - pre, during and post events - feeding into the process of brand building. As the social media space evolves, so too does the application of these into smart eventing to drive maximum impact for clients and their brands.

## 7. Into Africa

Over the past 20 years, South Africa has certainly established itself as global conventions, conferencing, sports and mega-events destination, with a glittering track record of high profile events, both large and small to its credit. This is set to increase, as is the demand for events further afield into the African continent. The World Bank has referred to Africa's potential as a sleeping giant - and where business and development go, events follow!

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## ABOUT KAREN ASHWIN

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