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Construction industry to improve technology use and safety

By Tommy Strydom

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Although the construction industry in South Africa is facing a downturn in the economy, it remains an important industry because it fulfils a major role in economic growth and infrastructure development. The industry is expected to rebound when economic conditions improve and investment in the industry increases.



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The construction industry also continues to face various challenges, such as efficiency, safety, costs and labour shortages. The anticipated trends for 2018 are therefore mainly based on overcoming the challenges the industry faces.

Improved use of technology

Technology that can be used in the construction industry, such as mobile and cloud technology, virtual and augmented reality, 3D printing and drones, is already changing the face of the industry and will continue to do so in 2018. Mobile and cloud technology makes it easier to communicate and visit sites remotely, while virtual and augmented reality enables construction companies to visualise their projects before the work actually starts.

Modular construction

The demand to complete buildings faster and with increased efficiency is supporting the trend for modular construction, where panels are built off-site and used to construct a building much faster than conventional construction methods. This type of construction is also more energy efficient, which contributes to its popularity.

Increased safety

Since workplace accidents happen most often in the construction industry, increased safety measures will continue to be an industry trend. Better procedure and increased use of technology, such as mobile safety apps will help the industry to reduce workplace accidents through improved communication of processes and procedures, as well as safety analytics.

Cost saving

The construction industry faces challenges from increasing prices for material and increased labour costs for skilled staff. The only way to overcome these challenges and remain competitive is to implement cost saving measures, such as modular construction and public-private partnerships. The use of technology to track stock and staff can also help with reducing cost and working more efficiently.

Green building

The trend in green building will continue in 2018, with an increasing number of customers opting for green building rather than conventional building methods. This trend will include the use of recycled materials and energy and water efficient solutions.

Structural shift in infrastructure

The demographic profile of South Africa will continue to change, with people moving to the cities from rural areas to find work and better facilities for their families. This places more pressure on government to invest more in infrastructure, creating more opportunities for the construction industry.

All eyes to remain on Africa

As the most underdeveloped continent, Africa offers many opportunities and all eyes remain on Africa regarding infrastructure and other construction projects. Countries with stable economies and political stability will remain in the sights of infrastructure investors.

ABOUT TOMMY STRYDOM

Tommy Strydom is acting group chief executive officer of Inyatsi Construction Group Holdings. Strydom joined Inyatsi in November 2009 managing contracts based in Swaziland and South Africa. At the end of 2012, he became managing director for the group's subsidiaries in Namibia as well as Mozambique. On 1 September 2016 he was promoted to group operations director, focusing on news markets, marketing, risk and services. He was recently promoted to group CEO.

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