

South Africans at world final of Get in the Ring Entrepreneurship Challenge

Two South African startups Newtech Rail and Adfire Creative M3dia's iMORPH3D app beat down the competition from the rest of central and southern Africa at the Get In The Ring entrepreneurship challenge in Johannesburg last week, to secure their places in the international Get In The Ring finals in Colombia later this year.



Newtech Rail, formed last year by industrial engineer and VUT director of innovation, Jan Jooste, has developed three significant power line breakthroughs set to take a chunk of a global, multi-billion dollar power industry pie.

iMORPH3D is a mobile app that enables users to create their own anamorphic 3D illusions, allowing events companies, advertising agencies or consumers to create new and exciting artwork. The app is now available in the Apple and Android app stores, so that anyone can have fun creating amazing 3D illustrations.

Get in the Ring offers quick opportunities to pitch

'Get In The Ring', an innovative new format for startup pitching, pits contestants against each other in a boxing ring, where they have 30 'nerve wracking' seconds to outline components of their business plans, while an interactive audience cheers them on. The competition is brought to Africa by the Real Entrepreneur Institute, in partnership with the Dutch Embassy in Pretoria, Bhive, North West University, Heineken, Sage One Accounting, City of Jo'burg, Business Engage, Ingweno, Flexible Workspace, TomTom, Innovation Hub, Silicon Cape and Uncovering Greatness. Additional supporting sponsors include Mammoet, TU Delft, NRF, KLM and Royal HaskoningDHV.

It is a rapidly growing international initiative launched in 2012, and is now contested by over 10 000 businesses in 80 countries. The winners will go through to the final showdown in Medellin, Colombia, in March this year.

Pitching their business cases to a panel of seasoned business executives, the contestants had only seconds to make compelling arguments in favour of their business ideas and potential returns. Judges said they were looking for staying power, passion, a clear overview of the problem the businesses were trying to solve, and crucially - an ROI for investors.

Partners endorse process

Brian Walsh, founder and CEO of the Real Success Network, noted, "This event is not just about pitching for funding, it is also about pitching for attention. In the process running up to the finals, they will be exposed to thousands of potential partners and funders."

With the event displaying some of the most innovative new business ideas emerging from South Africa and the rest of Africa, Tsholo Mogotsi, the director of economic development facilitation for the City of Joburg, was enthusiastic about the format, expressing the hope that the international finals of the competition could be brought to Johannesburg in future.

Steven Cohen, head of event co-sponsor Sage One International, said, "The competition is a great fit with our business and a wonderful initiative to support small and start-up business owners. It is helping to encourage excellence and innovation among local businesses, and provide role models and inspiration for the entrepreneurs of the future. Not only does the competition give start-ups an opportunity to network with prospective funders, investors and partners, but also, they could learn a great deal from the scrutiny their companies and business models receive."

Colleen Larsen, CE at co-sponsor Business Engage, added, "It encourages entrepreneurs to think on their feet and react swiftly when the need arises, which is a very necessary attribute for them to have."

To support the South African entrepreneurs James Sands of Adfire Creative M3dia and Jan Jooste of Newtech Rail, follow [@GITRSA](#) on Twitter.

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