

SMME Opportunity Roadshow sparks entrepreneurial spir

The 2017 SMME Opportunity Roadshow, which opened in Gauteng on 20 April and moves to Pietermaritzburg (19 May), Durban (19 July) and Cape Town (6 September), offers entrepreneurs an opportunity to hear expert opinion on sustainable business growth.



Source: SMME Opportunity Roadshow on [Facebook](#)

Over 450 delegates, including SMME owners, corporates and funding agencies attended the Gauteng event.

The SMME Opportunity Roadshow was created to empower growth in small, sustainable businesses in support of the national government's drive create job opportunities and boost the economy. Industry experts in finance, strategic management, tendering and marketing shared their knowledge and insight with delegates at the roadshow.

"Entrepreneurs have a passion, spark, flavour and drive that education cannot give," said Martin Ackerman CFO of Thevia, a green economy company that manufactures roof tiles made from 99% waste materials, addressing delegates.

"The small business sector has huge potential to address the key priorities of government," said Mandy Mtyelwa of the Department of Science and Technology. "SMMEs are the agency for economic growth and in order to improve South Africa, the country needs a transition from a mineral-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, which entails improving the quality, quantity and access to information."

One of the key sponsors of the Roadshow is Old Mutual, which is committed to the growth of small businesses throughout South Africa.

"The SMME Opportunity Roadshow gives entrepreneurs the chance to learn from and connect with experienced entrepreneurs, who faced the same challenges as they do and excelled in their business and life. In addition to being a great networking opportunity, the roadshow educates entrepreneurs on how to

grow their business, recognise and seize opportunities and protect their income,” said Old Mutual’s Personal Finance head of marketing, Ntombekaya Tisani.

“What young people need to empower them for business is skills and a change of mentality,” said Happy Phaleng from OUT (an LGBT community organisation). “Young people should not limit their personal growth by thinking that they can only get skills by going to college.”

Social entrepreneur Masonwabe Fuma, the president at Enactus University of Johannesburg, reiterated Phaleng’s views. “When you become an entrepreneur, you get the mindset of solving problems and, as you solve problems, you create jobs.”

Tessa Cooke, marketing manager of roadshow sponsors Datsun, confirmed the commitment of public and private organisations to the roadshow. “The organisation is always on the look-out for partnerships aimed at improving and enabling the SME sector, so we are proud to be part of the SMME Opportunity Roadshow 2017.”

The importance of growth in the SMME sector has been highlighted by the Minister of Small Business Development, Lindiwe Zulu, who stated that small businesses need to contribute at least 800,000 jobs a year to match the government's goal of creating 11 million jobs by 2030.

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