

Audit exhibitions - EXSA

The Exhibition Association of Southern Africa (EXSA), the representative voice of show organisers, exhibitors and suppliers for 23 years, has embarked on a drive to have its members ABC audited.

Carol Weaving, chairperson of EXSA, says this initiative will provide exhibitors with the protection of knowing that promises made by exhibition organisers in the lead-up to shows, are true.

She comments: "We have in South Africa exhibition organisers whose professionalism and credibility rank among the finest in the world.

"Nevertheless, companies are still having their fingers burned by rogue exhibition organisers who let them down after promising the earth, in terms of numbers and profile of expected visitors - or even cancelling shows at the last minute.

"Our proposal to ABC-audit exhibitions will go a long way to raising standards in this important marketing sector," she says.

Once in place, ad agencies, marketing agencies and media houses will be able to look at audited figures of various exhibitions - which will go a long way to helping them make the right decisions for their clients, she believes.

"I believe it will also go a long way to helping them understand the power of the exhibition medium."

Initial reaction among organisers at a recent EXSA Organisers Forum meeting to the suggestion was unanimously favourable, according to Weaving. So far, organisers including Specialised Exhibitions, South Africa RAI, Exhibitions for Africa (previously Reed), Kagiso, Nichepro and SARCDCA, have already committed to, and have commenced with, the process.

EXSA has commissioned professional audit company, ABC Audit, to conduct the audits on behalf of organisers. In terms of the arrangement, each and every exhibition will be audited, in terms of exact number of visitors, visitor profile and overall quality of the show.

Each organiser will be entitled to use the ABC Audit logo, which will add immediate credibility to their show. This is just one more reason for exhibitors to deal with registered EXSA organisers, as this guarantees the peace of mind, knowing that they are dealing with credible organisations that are accountable to EXSA to provide a prescribed level of service.

"We are now in the process of battenning down the finer points of how the ABC auditing process will work, inclusive of a reduced rate with ABC Audit for member organisers.

"Once in place, one of EXSA's ongoing roles will be to monitor how organisers are implementing this process," she says.

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