

# Rising together to meet expectations



The exhibition industry, both locally and globally, is preparing for tougher times as economic growth slows down.

By Gill Gibbs, executive committee member of EXSA.

**G**lobally, growth has become difficult to sustain and as a result, new opportunities for partnerships and collaboration are being created. Many organisers are looking outside their home country for new shows and event opportunities.

Expectations from attendees are definitely higher than before, with the experience element being a top requirement. Technology will play its part in shifting expectations.

Venues, suppliers and organisers must consistently deliver excellence across the board and find ways to raise the quality of the exhibits and the calibre of the exhibitors.

Although the economic outlook is not that positive we

must remember; as venues, suppliers and organisers, we have a direct impact on the economy with every exhibition that is held.

If we do what we do well, this goes a long way towards sustainability in our industry – locally and globally – and the preservation of our industry brand, which is critical for our international visitors, organisers and suppliers.

The exhibition industry is the heartbeat of the business events industry. We are dedicated and committed to excellence in project realisation and that is why we keep doing what we do, why we sacrifice our nights, our weekends, often encroaching upon and engulfing our family time – to ensure

that the exhibition, the show, or the event goes live when it should, to the delight and appreciation of the attendees.

As EXSA, as an industry body, we are hearing from our members that they are experiencing alarmingly short lead times. The preparation time that it takes for production and planning for the project to achieve the desired excellence, is not always being taken into cognisance when it comes down to the project approval phase, whether this be from a lack of understanding, experience and knowledge, or a lack of organisation, or at times, a lack of responsibility.

Another trend is the project payment terms are not always being adhered to, despite all

attempts to achieve the same and this has a domino effect, not only on the project, but on the sustainability of the industry players.

The industry landscape is changing, budgets are becoming tighter and venues and suppliers have to make it work. Start-ups are coming through the ranks and the challenge for industry associations is how to package what we do and present it attractively to the younger employment-seeking generation in the interests of longevity for the industry.

Our industry associations must be primed to be able to assist young talent and talent that is already in our industry, to progress further, to find their niche – and to be the centre of learning and innovation. ■

EXHIBITION & EVENT ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



E: [info@exsa.co.za](mailto:info@exsa.co.za)  
T: +27 10 300 7907  
[www.exsa.co.za](http://www.exsa.co.za)



# EXPEERIENCE

Join and use our Industry network of vetted and approved  
**Venues and Suppliers**

\*\*\*The knowledge base and expertise we have within our membership companies is **EXSA-LLENT !!!**