



TOP TIPS TO ENSURE THE GROWTH OF AN EXHIBITION

By Craig Newman, CEO of the Johannesburg Expo Centre.

It's never as simple as 'If you plan it, they will come'. The event world is unpredictable and the old adage of hosting a party and being nervous no one will show, only on a much larger scale, is true for those of us in the industry. To plan and execute successful events time and time again can be painstaking no doubt, but if there's anything I've learned in my almost two decades of doing this, it's to treat each event as though it's the first.

#1 You're only as good as your last execution

It's easy to become a victim of your own success. Once you have given people an exceptional experience, that's all they will want. Anything less and you'll know all about it on social media or in the press. Consistency is crucial in this game and the way to achieve that is to pay equal attention to every single detail - event after event.

#2 Keep the theme relevant to the times

Event goers and customers like to be on the pulse of what's hip and happening. From the décor to the food to the entertainment, keeping your event on trend or "lit" is pertinent when it comes to talk-ability and buzz. Whether it's the pinkest gin at your bar, the latest in Vegan catering or an award-winning speaker; plugging into the signs of the times will go a long way in keeping those feet rushing through your doors.

#3 Use state-of-the-art technology

Whether that is a seamless parking experience using license-plate recognition technology or bots that are taking coffee orders at registration, there is no doubt that the latest technologies and innovations will set your event apart from the rest. And of course you must ensure that people can get online, because no event actually happened



if it wasn't "instagrammed", which is why the Expo Centre has free WiFi in all halls.

#4 Tie events to popular celebs or influencers.

Social media plays a big part when it comes to the court of public opinion. By inviting or partnering with certain personalities that speak to the theme of your event comes the opportunity to leverage their social media currency. If you don't already have relationships with brand ambassadors, get on the social wagon soon and start making new friends.

#5 Make it an immersive experience

People want to touch, feel and explore. They want to be a part of the action. We see this all the times at events like the Rand Show, Ultra SA, Classic Car Show to name a few. Being immersed in an experience, whether it's an interactive cooking demonstration or fun rides

for the whole family, is what will keep them coming back year after year.

#6 The hygiene factor

At the end of the day, a good event is also about the basics which is core to the work we do here at the Expo Centre. Having a strong maintenance team and systems in place to ensure the grounds are well kept, clean and the facilities work like a well-oiled machine is essential.



Craig Newman, CEO of the Johannesburg Expo Centre.

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