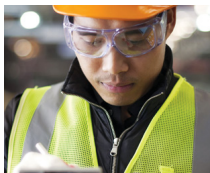


The latest occupational health and safety innovations all under one roof

Written by Claire Rencken
Friday, 05 June 2015 21:15



This year, Africa's Occupational Safety and Health exhibition (A-OSH Expo) was held at the Gallagher Convention Centre in Johannesburg, from May 12 to 14. CLAIRE RENCKEN was there and spoke to some of the exhibitors

Formerly known as OSH Africa, the exhibition was rebranded to better represent its Africa-centric strategic direction. About 2 445 eager industry occupational health and safety professionals queued at the doors, where the 85 exhibitors shared their knowledge and expertise on an interactive and highly energised basis over the three-day event.

Joshua Low, event director at Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery, says that the excitement levels were high as the exhibition enjoyed an increase in visitor numbers of almost 28 percent over the previous year's event. "We welcomed 888 first-time visitors, many of whom were thrilled with the superior quality of both the products and services on display."



In addition to learning about best practice from the 69 local South African companies and 16 international companies (of which 27 local and 12 international companies were exhibiting for the first time at A-OSH Expo), two seminar programmes and a conference provided much-needed educational input.

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The National Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Board (Noshebo) Theatre seminar, and Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association (PASMA) Working at Height Theatre proved extremely popular with the crowds and were packed to capacity. The South African Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (Saioosh) conference was once again booked out weeks in advance of the exhibition opening.

Nare Kgomo from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) says: "I started in OHS at the DCS last year, so this is my first A-OSH Expo and I found it to be really excellent. My goal was to source service providers for OHS training courses and I will be following up on a number of suppliers I have found. I attended some of the Noshebo Seminar Theatre sessions and was really impressed with the quality of the speakers and the topics presented."

Low adds: "We introduced two new features this year: the Business Matchmaking Programme (an initiative that matched visitors up with the most relevant exhibitors); and the Fire Hazard Identification Challenge (which was



based on a simulated office environment with six to eight fire hazards that had to be identified by participants). The Fire Protection Association of Southern Africa also ran its InFiRES conference alongside A-OSH Expo for the first time. The conference was a great success, attracting over 100 people from some of the leading insurance companies in South Africa."

Datasaint showcased a ppe2go stand-alone, self-service kiosk and software solution that allows for biometric authentication and personal protective equipment (PPE) selection through a touch-screen interactive interface.

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The University of South Africa's Centre for Business Management introduced a number of industry-relevant courses, including one in safety management and one in advanced safety management. The basic course provides an overview of safety management while the advanced course focuses on a broader view of safety management and the responsibilities of both line managers and staff safety practitioners.

Astutis, a company based in the United Kingdom, provides a wide range of accredited health, safety and environmental classroom-based training courses, tailored in-company training, e-learning and distance learning. It also offers consultancy solutions to businesses and individuals across the globe.



As a first-time exhibitor at the show, Astutis MD, Steve Terry, was impressed by its scope. "Many of our e-learners have been coming to the stand to meet us, and we are finding this a great way to connect with delegates. I personally don't get the opportunity to travel to South Africa as regularly as I would like, so it was great to catch up with our colleagues and delegates at this superb event."

Alco-Safe, specialists in management of substance abuse in the workplace, exhibited for the fifth consecutive year. Director, Rhys Evans, sees great value in the show: "It's an affordable way to market ourselves to both existing and prospective clients without having to drive all over the country and set up appointments to see people. We get the opportunity to create brand

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awareness and we definitely generate sales as a result of being at the show, even if these take place only ten months down the line.”

Lizette Kasselmann, group marketing manager for North Safety Products, echoed these sentiments, and was clearly proud of the company’s stand: “This is the best I’ve ever seen North’s stand look!” she enthused.

Lauren Clueit, owner of We Do That, the company that conceptualised and project managed the impressive 3M stand, said: “3M is a solid pillar in industry and in the communities that it serves. An integral part of this is protecting workers with world-class PPE.



“Each pillar on the 3M stand represented a different product family, with a spotlight on new or key products. The stand design incorporated the new 3M brand trifecta, the company’s new tagline: ‘3M Science. Applied to Life’, as well as a ‘call to action’ to connect on Facebook and create posts about experiences.”

There seemed to be mixed feelings among the exhibitors about the rebranding of the show. Some felt that, because the show was seamlessly co-located with the Securex exhibition this year, there were definitely more feet moving through their stands.

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Others observed that there was some confusion about what the “A” in A-OSH stands for. A surprising number of people were not aware that it stands for “Africa” and felt that a better job could have been done of the rebranding.

One thing’s for sure, the show seems to keep going from strength to strength each year. We look forward to seeing what next year brings.