

Positive outlook for meetings, events industry

 By [Karen Ashwin](#)

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I'm a firm believer that, due to the dynamics of global economic shift we've experienced, the way we live, work and run our businesses has changed irrevocably - life will truly never be the same again! This holds true for the South African meetings and events industry in 2010.



1. Gone are the days of experimentation and excess and extravagance. **Less is now more.** The carefully considered, back-to-basics approach to life, living and finances will continue to impact the live events and meetings industry with tighter budgets, resulting in fewer, more strategically relevant, targeted and smaller face-to-face meetings and events, both locally and internationally.
2. Smaller travel budgets means **less travel** - and an increase in online and electronic resources such as tele- and video-conferencing and Internet-based discussion groups and forums.
3. As citizens and consumers **increase their scrutiny** of governments, industry and commerce with demands for responsible choices, equity and integrity, we will see this reflected in cautious business approaches and increased corporate governance. For our industry, the pitching process is probably only set to become more competitive and convoluted as suppliers are scrutinised more and more thoroughly.
4. The **Environmental Lobby** will grow in momentum both globally and locally. As mentioned before, travel to meetings will be carefully considered, while event and location/venue greening awareness and practice will go from strength to strength.
5. As our industry continues to mature, the **legislative drive** to formalise and safeguard our practices will continue. Here we'll witness the drafting of bills and laws to ensure standards are upheld, along with accreditation initiatives for professionals.
6. In South Africa, our country and economy will **boom** this year in anticipation of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. As we gear up for this watershed event, we will continue to buck international economic and social trends in the short term, while we brace ourselves for business after the world cup tournament has left our shores.
7. We will see many **enterprises starting up** and perhaps even taking off as a result of real and perceived opportunities which result from this long-awaited "defining moment." Unfortunately, some will not survive in the long term.
8. Already, the meetings and events industry is experiencing the **positive spinoff** from large organisations and corporates planning their 2010 FIFA World Cup hospitality calendars and events. And there is plenty more to come.
9. With many local and international businesses clamouring to secure special venues and host a handful of celebrities at their 2010 FIFA World Cup bashes, it will be interesting to watch and see **who turns up where**. (I foresee a battle of the brands looming here- this is where great customer relationship management will win the day!)
10. The strong will survive well beyond 2010. However, we'll need to be **flexible, streamlined and entrepreneurial** - continually looking for ways of re-energising and reinventing ourselves, scanning our horizons and constantly regrouping to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

As an industry, let's celebrate our ongoing ability to reinvent ourselves and create new opportunities for growth and innovation, to find new solutions to conquer challenges and to constantly deliver a high quality product.

ABOUT KAREN ASHWIN

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