

CTICC: The MICE industry is still as strong as ever

The meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) industry is still going strong despite tough economic conditions. In the first four months of 2017, the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) has hosted eight consumer shows. A combination of innovation, new formats and genres, and savvy marketing have ensured exhibitions maintain their popularity.



Image Source: [CTICC](#)

In its 18th Global Exhibition Barometer, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) has forecasted a stable outlook for the industry in South Africa, and the wider continent and indicates that between 45-65% of companies in the industry expect an increase in revenues for 2017.

The CTICC has so far hosted the following exhibitions in 2017:

- Cape Town Art Fair
- SA International Tattoo Convention
- Cape Vape Festival
- Property Buyer's Expo
- All Things Yummy & Easter Bunny Show
- Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon Expo
- Decorex Cape Town
- FanCon: Cape Town Comic Con
- Good Food & Wine Show

In April alone, the centre hosted five exhibitions. Later this week, couples can look forward to the Wedding Expo taking place from 10 to 11 June.

With over 11,000m² of exhibition space on offer, the CTICC has kept the number of exhibitions hosted year-on-year in the double digits. In the 2015/16 financial year, the centre hosted 15 exhibitions with 195,312 people visiting.

“It is encouraging for us at the CTICC to know that the exhibitions industry is still as strong as ever. We’ve landed some exciting new exhibitions this year due to the centre’s versatility, reputation and our world class facilities and services that can cater to such a broad variety of events. With the opening of our CTICC East expansion, we will be able to offer event organisers, and exhibitors, even more options in the hope of growing their already wonderful exhibition offering with the increase of our exhibitions capacity to a total of over 21,000m²,” says Julie-May Ellingson, chief executive officer at the CTICC.

Experience products and services with all senses

“Being in the exhibition industry, we always need to be constantly innovating and changing the show to suit the needs of our visitors. With online being such an integral part of how we communicate and get information out, as an exhibition platform, we need to remind visitors of the importance and experience that you receive when attending exhibitions. It’s about being able to experience products and services with all senses. This isn’t just a way to sell your product and service an exhibitor but you are able to get your target audience to experience your brand and product in a way that they would never be able to otherwise,” says Sian Cullingworth, portfolio director: lifestyle, design and retail exhibitions, at Reed Exhibitions, and organiser of Decorex Cape Town.

Accommodating sizable events

Tens of thousands of visitors also attend the Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon (OMTOM) Expo which has been hosted at the CTICC for the last five years. The expo has grown steadily over the last couple of years having started with 90 companies and 174 exhibitions stands in 2013 to 110 companies with 198 stands presently.

For organisers such as OMTOM choosing the right venue with which to partner, is an important part of the event’s branding and marketing efforts. “There are not many venues that can accommodate an event of this size and it seems fitting that the world’s most beautiful marathon has its registration at a world class facility such as the CTICC,” says Liezle Bothma, the OMTOM expo manager, from Conker Exhibitions.

Bothma adds: “Although these are difficult economic times, The Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon Expo is in a fortunate position that it has managed to still have a sold out hall and that it continues to showcase the top brands in the running and sporting market. The visitor numbers have remained constant, between 40,000 and 45,000 visitors over the three days.”

An event model that works

Also hosted at the CTICC, the inaugural Property Buyer Show, which attracted 35 exhibitors and 3,100 visitors, will now exhibit in Durban and Johannesburg after the success of the Cape Town leg of the exhibition. The event, according to Richard Stubbs, Event Director at Splintelligent who organised the show, created a platform to engage with the property sector. “It was really encouraging to see intent to purchase and offers taking place on the exhibition floor. One of the highlights of the show for me was the launch and sell-out of Phase 1 of a new development in Paarl. This affirms that the event model works, and is a win-win for buyers and sellers,” says Stubbs.

Celebrating Global Exhibitions Day

Under the banner of The Global Association of Exhibitions Industry (UFI), of which the CTICC is a member, the centre is once again joined fellow industry partners to celebrate the second annual Global Exhibitions Day on 7 June 2017.

“The Cape Town International Convention Centre is proud to support UFI and Global Exhibitions Day. An exhibition is an effective marketplace. The face-to-face, immediate nature of exhibitions make it a powerful, experiential marketing platform where exhibitors are able to meet and connect with prime customers, assess what the competition is doing and explore trade opportunities. A Grant Thornton study, commissioned by the Association for African Exhibition Organisers this year, shows that the exhibition industry contributed R75b to the national economy in 2015. We are using this day to recognise the importance of the exhibitions industry in growing our economy,” says Ellingson.

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