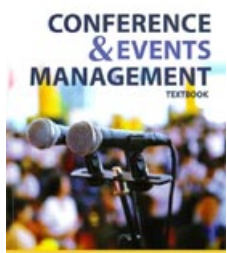


Powerful training for conferences, events, exhibitions business from industry experts

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As a conferences, events and exhibitions provider since 1999, Litha Communications has produced successful international and national events for private and public sector clients. Incorporating this extensive knowledge, together with that of an international Certified Meetings Professional (CMP®) and trainer, it will be offering short courses in project management for events; risk management for events; development and control of event budgets; finding and managing sponsors and other relevant subjects.



"There is a need, particularly in the public sector, to understand the nature of events before drafting the request for proposal or tender. Too often, clients conceive that the venue will provide all that is necessary from invitations to décor. Venues sell space and furniture; it is up to the client to utilise that space in the best possible manner. The venue can provide many of the required services but all of these are in addition to the standard rates and may not necessarily be the ideal solution," explains Teresa Jenkins, MD of Litha Communications.

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"The major concern is the lack of understanding in the need for work breakdown schedules, Gantt charts and other essential project management tools in the planning of such events. Internationally, major events have anything up to a three-year lead-time but it is not uncommon for South Africans to attempt such events in less than three months. Of course, one can have superb quality in such a short time, but the costs are proportional.

"What is required is a strategic approach to events that integrates corporate governance principles, management systems and risk management, particularly in the public sector, which is governed by specific legislation such as the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). These short courses will introduce these and other concepts to those within the public and private sector who design and manage events. The courses will enable them to articulate the kind of event they require and the level of assistance they need.

"Though it may seem as if we are training current and prospective clients to set them free of events organisers, I believe that this is a service that is needed in the conferences, events and exhibitions industry, if it is to survive the influx of amateurs, all underbidding on crucial, reputational events.

"Once clients have understood what is required, they are in a far stronger position to visualise the event they need, understand its parameters and use professional expertise to set the tone. As a company, we are only too happy to have clients who understand the complexity of delivering memorable experiences on time and to budget."

Gwen Watkins will run the course at the Litha Communications head office in Johannesburg. A Certified Meetings Professional®, by the Convention Industry Council, Washington DC US, she has written the 'Conference & Events Management textbook'. This is a South African guide based on her 20-year experience in the industry and her lecturing background in the subjects at several tertiary institutions. She is also a member of the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI).

"For those who are not based in Johannesburg, the course can be run onsite at a client's premises, provided there are at least eight delegates," concludes Jenkins.



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