

A record-breaking sixth edition of DISCOP Johannesburg



DISCOP Johannesburg 2017 had an air of business about it this year. With an increased focus on meetings and networking, the event was somehow more focused and serious than in previous editions, less glitz and glamour – but definitely more deal-making and demand.

With over 1 500 delegates in attendance (the highest so far) and a condensed lay-out, buyers and sellers seemed more intent on one-to-one meetings, particularly around African content.

In fact, DISCOP Johannesburg 2017 saw a 50 per cent jump in the number of companies selling content “Made In Africa” in comparison to last year, with many companies from the continent (IROKO | AFOREVO | RTI | DIFFA) confirming significant deals.

In previous years DISCOP Johannesburg has boasted cocktail lounges, informal networking spaces, and a host of rooms dedicated to side-bar programmes. This year, all elements were hosted within the

main exhibition floor of the Sandton Convention Centre, giving the event a focused and more streamlined feeling.

An expanded space for smaller meeting tables meant more opportunities for smaller players to get maximum benefit from the event. Talking to many attendees, the atmosphere at this year’s event was definitely one of seriousness and intent.

Over the past two years DISCOP has been making a concerted effort to reach out to independent producers, offering more affordable ticketing and meeting table opportunities so that the event is not just a showcase for the major international players. This outreach seems to be paying-off, as this year there were over 300 independent

African producers in attendance, all intent on selling their content.

As Sheryl Navarro, DISCOP’s head of Customers Relations explains further, “During these three days, all signs pointed to intensifying competition between distribution platforms hungry for content. For the first time, sellers had more leverage and ended up with better deals. Competition is also growing between global entertainment brands who dominated the marketplace until now, and home grown content rapidly catching up on quality and cross-border potential.”

While the major international brands were all there this year with massive and impressive stands, somehow it was the producers who were the stars of

the show. With focuses on technology, co-productions, and building bridges across Africa, independent producers and international distributors alike all realise that central to the future of the industry is quality and accessible content.

Patrick Zuchowicki, founder of DISCOP Markets puts it this way, “Until recently, the Sub-Saharan African entertainment content marketplace was dominated by one or two players, and thus negatively impacted by minimal income opportunities and chronic lack of funding for independent producers. Today, competition is intensifying, with massive investments in internet connectivity, a steady migration to digital terrestrial television and significant smart phone adoption, mobile, digital and