

BOFE has 13% increase in visitors

The 20th annual Business Opportunities and Franchise Expo (BOFE), held in September 2013 with platinum sponsor Eskom, saw a 13% increase in visitor numbers this year, with strong interest from pan-African exhibitors for future shows.

The expo saw over 8,000 visitors streaming in to discuss business and franchise opportunities and business financing and support services with over 250 exhibitors.



Exhibitors participating in the event offered business opportunities requiring investments of anything from as little as R350, all the way to over R2 million. BOFE highlighted business opportunities suited to everyone's skills, area and budget. Exhibitor feedback was positive, who found that the visitors were serious about thoroughly investigating new business opportunities.

Lynn Chamier, GM of event organiser Thebe Exhibitions & Projects, said while exhibitors had been delighted with the response, a key success of the event had been the high level of interest from African delegates to participate in future BOFE shows.

"With the growth in the food and retail sectors across on the continent, BOFE is poised for growth in bringing country pavilions and visitors from across the continent. Delegates from Nigeria and Lesotho have already expressed strong interest in being present in 2014 and the company is in talks with businesses in these and other African countries."

Eskom used the event as a platform to promote entrepreneurship among the youth, and its Eskom Development Foundation handed out prize money to the winners of its "SimamaRanta" secondary schools entrepreneurship competition.

BIC 2013 winner announced

Eskom exhibitors included established BEE companies in the key sectors of agriculture, manufacturing and trade/services. Eskom gave away R1.7 million to the winners in its 20th Business Investment Competition (BIC 2013) at BOFE, helping to ensure that top entrepreneurs had the funding necessary to expand their businesses and create jobs in their communities.

A spokesperson for the overall winner of BIC 2013, Liuhuwani Tshifhango, of Khariye Poultry Farming, said BOFE had been very interesting and useful for the company. "We marketed ourselves as much as we could and saw huge demand. Visitors were looking for thousands of chickens. I feel as if I can get those deals."

Haylene Liberty, CEO of the Eskom Development Foundation, said, "At the foundation supporting small business development is a top priority. Our sponsorship of BOFE is in line with this commitment and this year was a great success. Several of finalists made great business contacts, initiated lucrative deals and used the marketing opportunity to great success. We believe that the expo goes a long way to creating a culture conducive to successful and sustainable small businesses in South Africa."

Best exhibitors

Chamier said exhibitors this year had shown increased innovation in marketing their opportunities.

- Best Booth Stand - Cazabella
- Best Small Stand - I Love Diepsloot
- Best Medium Stand - Spykos
- Best Large Stand - Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA)
- Best Eskom Business Investment Competition Stand - Flywheel Custom Chariots

- Best SimamaRanta School Stand - Springfontein Secondary School
- Platinum Award for Overall Stand Excellence - Operation Khanyisa
- Best Stand Personnel - Iconomy SA
- Best Eco-Friendly Stand - I Love Diepsloot
- Most Innovative Stand - Operation Khanyisa
- Most Organised Exhibitor - easy Forex

The next BOFE will be staged from 11-14 September 2014. For more information, go to www.bofe.co.za.

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