



Conference Design & Management

AFRICAN AGENDA COMPANY PROFILE

1. ABOUT AFRICAN AGENDA

African Agenda is a professional conference organiser specialising in national and international conferences for associations, academics, NGOs/non-profits, government and companies. We also organise exhibitions and other conference-related events and are a full-service, hands-on partner for our clients, committed to seamless service and the highest levels of professionalism.

We deliver flawlessly-executed conferences and events, as you would expect of a world-class professional conference organiser, but we also do something much rarer: we offer an exceptional team of people who make the conference organising experience a pleasure. No matter the size or complexity of your conference, African Agenda has a service level to suit. As project managers, we're happy to work alongside any other specialist agencies you employ, providing our services and expertise to complement theirs.

African Agenda is one of South Africa's officially recognised professional conference organisers and has attained the highest accreditation given by the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI): SAACI-Accredited International Professional Conference Organiser. Our Managing Director Keith Burton is a recent member of the national board of SAACI and was responsible for organising the 2007 SAACI National Conference. We are also proud members of Meeting Professionals International (MPI) which provides us with access to the best knowledge and resources in the industry.

Based in Cape Town with country-wide knowledge and regional experience

With our headquarters in Cape Town and projects throughout South Africa and Africa, African Agenda has excellent and long-standing relationships with the best suppliers in the industry, and extensive networks of contacts both locally and internationally. We have talented web and print design teams on retainer as well as an established network of premium service providers in audio-visual, event and entertainment production, transport, touring, public relations and media co-ordination, and staffing. We also have close working relationships with the convention bureaus and regional tourism organisations throughout South Africa.

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The team

With more than ten years' experience in the industry, African Agenda is one of Southern Africa's most well-established and reputable professional conference organisers. Keith Burton and Paul de Waal founded the company that grew into African Agenda in 2000, and today we have a unique two-hand management team in owners Keith Burton and Kristen Tremeer, an outstanding team with extraordinary depth of experience.

From hands-on attention during the planning stages to a full-strength presence on the floor at the conference, the ownership philosophy that drives African Agenda is apparent. The owners of the company each play an active role in securing work and in project implementation; once underway, one takes the project management role while the others focus on specific conference strategy and elements. We firmly believe that African Agenda stands alone in providing this level of personalised attention from its owners.



Keith Burton, Owner/Managing Director

Keith graduated from the University of Cape Town with a business degree and worked in corporate finance and project management before embarking on a career in the conference industry in June 2000 when he started the company that grew into African Agenda. Keith was a member of the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) Western Cape committee from 2006 to 2010, chaired the SAACI Western Cape committee from 2008 to 2010, and served on the SAACI national board from 2008 to 2010. In 2007 he was responsible for programme development and logistical planning and management for the SAACI National Conference. Keith project manages the African Agenda team dedicated to each project as well as the budgeting process and financial management to audit standards. He is exceedingly thorough, has excellent management skills, and is a leader that brings out the best in the people working around him.



Kristen Tremeer, Owner/Director

Kristen received a Master's degree in International Studies from Stellenbosch University. After having worked as a research assistant for the Head of the Political Science department, she joined Omega Investment Research as an organiser of international trade and investment promotion events and editor of a monthly electronic journal of political and economic analysis. Kristen joined African Agenda in 2004 and is responsible for speaker engagement and programme management; the development of marketing and communications materials and conference publications; conference analysis; and comprehensive report writing. Her eye for detail and strict style enforcement ensure that every piece of conference-related communication, from Keynote Speaker invitations to the delegate reminder, is exceptionally well-written and cohesive.



Paul de Waal, Owner/Director

After graduating with a civil engineering degree from the University of Cape Town, Paul worked as a property developer for five years. Eight years ago a career change beckoned and he has been involved in conferencing ever since. Paul brings the traditional engineering skills of planning, project management and problem solving to the company. Paul is also on the Board of the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company, one of Cape Town's premier tourist attractions.



Davinia Lamb, Financial and Registration Manager

Davinia effortlessly manages the delegate registration and conference administration process, including invoicing, payment reconciliation and accommodation arrangements and in her 5 years at African Agenda Davinia has been responsible for the registration of more than 8,000 delegates. With her studies in Accounting, she administers all the company's bookkeeping and accounting procedures, including financial audit preparation.



Claire Davidson, Conference and Marketing Co-ordinator and Greening Manager

Claire graduated with a BA degree from the University of Cape Town and chose to further her studies with Diplomas in Public Relations and Events Management. With a background in marketing, the management of corporate events and the hospitality industry, Claire assists with preparation for and execution of conferences including programme management and conference marketing communication and promotions. Passionate about the environment and dedicated to sustainability, Claire is African Agenda's Greening Manager, both in-house and event-specific, and works hard to ensure compliance in employees, clients and suppliers.



Karen Hilliard, Conference Co-ordinator and Exhibition Manager

Karen received an introduction to the conference industry when first working with African Agenda in November 2009 in Tanzania. She comes from an academic background, but while completing her Honours degree in Justice and Transformation at the University of Cape Town was inducted into the corporate world in the Broll Property Group's International Commercial Property Investment Division. Karen joined African Agenda at the beginning of 2010, bringing to the team exceptional organisational abilities, strong analytical and conceptual skills, and experience dealing with a variety of people in an exceptionally professional manner.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE

African Agenda has received the top accreditation, SAACI-Accredited International Professional Conference Organiser (SAIPCO), from the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI), which confirms that the company has, in addition to the requisite skills, expertise, ethical integrity and professionalism, the office infrastructure and systems capacity to organise large national and international conferences.



Regulatory and compliance

As a company with a history of successful conferences as well as forward bookings, African Agenda is secure in all aspects of cash flow, from retained to future income. All regulatory requirements in terms of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) are up to date and African Agenda is fully compliant. We hold liability insurance of a minimum of ZAR 10,000,000 which applies to all of our conferences and events.

African Agenda aims to comply with BBBEE guidelines in terms of Ownership, Control, Employment Equity, Skills Development, Preferential Procurement, Enterprise Development and Social Investment. While we currently have a Level 4 BBBEE rating, we are now undergoing a re-rating process and we anticipate the award of a Level 2 rating by mid-2011. African Agenda supports the BBBEE initiative and promotes awareness by using BBBEE-compliant suppliers, and will always try to use suppliers local to the region in which a conference is held in order to assist and promote previously disadvantaged communities and emerging entrepreneurs.

IT infrastructure: software, backup and security

Email and website hosting and backup

African Agenda uses a virtualised private server that is fully managed, from configuration and optimisation to core operating system updates. Backups are generated every other day. Web-hosting is enterprise-grade so services are usually up all the time and can be expected to work flawlessly. All back-end jobs are undertaken outside of regular office hours to prevent any disruption.

Secure online payment gateway for online registration

African Agenda uses Virtual Card Services for secure online credit card payments. This automated electronic transaction system protects cardholder security, ensures conference cash flow is protected through daily settlements and is easily integrated into conference registration systems. For the protection of African Agenda and the cardholder, African Agenda is never permitted access to the credit card details used for online payments.

IT support and integrity of data

African Agenda is supported in its IT from networking to server configuration as well as desktop support and hardware and software infrastructure. IT health is maintained through actively cleaning up unused data; ensuring security checks are in place; and following protocols to keep the IT infrastructure in an efficient and economical state. We use a Cyberoam Unified Threat Management device to monitor the internal and external network and internet traffic, including anti-spam, anti-virus and anti-spyware capacity. Data is backed up daily and stored offsite, and can be restored easily so the flow of business and efficiency will not be hindered, even under difficult, unforeseen circumstances.

Web capacity and integrity

African Agenda's web team designs and develops the online components of conference websites, starting with design and functionality and expanding throughout the life cycle of the conference. Each conference website is bespoke and developed with the user in mind as we strive to create simple, highly useable websites with no gimmicks.

Online services we develop and support include registration integration with the secure payment gateway; back-end tools that monitor user activity; registration details; papers and presentations content management tools with easy-to-use front-ends; integration with the Summit Pro conference management software; and ongoing update and maintenance work. All systems are built on principles of SEO (search engine optimisation) and are secure from known vulnerabilities and internet attacks.

Conference management software

Service excellence requires the conference organiser to manage large amounts of delegate information, from registration to reporting and analysis. The *efficient* use of conference management software is the first step in successful information management. The *effective* use of such software means that African Agenda can impress with a personal touch, providing delegates with personalised account updates, marketing communications, ticketing and more. African Agenda use Summit Pro, a powerful conference management software package designed for large conferences and exhibitions, and we make use of regular training and software updates.

3. CORE COMPETENCIES

Organising successful conferences has been the focus of African Agenda for more than 10 years. We provide a comprehensive service and each and every element of our organisational offering is carried out with equal precision and flair. Our core competencies are where we offer something special, how we excel and what differentiates us from the rest.

Project management

African Agenda are not just event managers but project managers as well. Our Managing Director Keith Burton started his career in project management for a construction company and our Director Paul de Waal brings the project management skills of an engineer to the team.

We know from experience that goal-setting and strategic planning are vital to a world-class conference. They result in more compelling marketing, more lucrative sponsorship and exhibitor partnerships and higher delegate attendance. We'll help you develop a strategic vision and the necessary plans to achieve it, and action every step.

Our sophisticated project and financial management systems ensure every contingency is anticipated. At the outset of a conference we prepare the detailed documentation that will govern its lifecycle: a timeline, a marketing plan, a sponsorship plan, and budget and cash flow projections, all of which we continuously evaluate throughout the project, achieving milestones and ensuring no bottlenecks or unnecessary stress.

African Agenda drives the process by minuting meetings, allocating tasks and monitoring accountability. We manage the client's involvement to ensure the demands on your time are predictable and clearly defined. We keep our processes transparent and our reporting to you full, accurate and prompt. And we keep the entire project under control and on target: for quality, timeline and budget.

Financial management

Financial integrity is at the heart of our business and project management systems. Our rigorous financial management practices will afford you full confidence in the security of your project: conference financial management is professionally undertaken with a full time bookkeeper,



regular monthly management accounts, pre-audit preparation and stringent controls. Africa Agenda ensures comprehensive and tightly controlled fiscal management of conference finances: budgets are developed, conference-specific bank accounts opened and reconciled monthly, income and expenditure regularly matched to budgets and anomalies flagged. Our systems are world-class and robust and leave no room for doubt.

Conference innovation

African Agenda delivers more than just superbly run conferences: we add the vision and flair that will transform your conference into a truly inspiring experience.

Our close international collaborations expose us to the very latest thinking in international conferencing. Working with world-class experts from across the spectrum of industry disciplines, we are constantly exposed to new ideas and new approaches in design, technology, marketing and communications. These relationships afford us a global perspective and up-to-the-minute awareness of the international marketplace, bringing an extra level of sophistication and creativity to our work here in South Africa.

New technologies are offering exciting opportunities in conferencing, from

live webcasting of sessions and real-time delegate feedback to social marketing and networking at events. We stay abreast of all relevant trends in technology, ensuring early adoption whenever appropriate. We know how to apply technical innovations to our conferences and to our own systems, resulting in efficiency, accuracy, transparency and exceptional service delivery.

Relationships

The relationship between the client and the conference organiser is of paramount importance and is key to the success of the conference – without a close and respectful working relationship, the task of organising a conference can be onerous. African Agenda prides itself on working with a client in a flexible and friendly manner, working together toward a shared goal. There is a clear benefit in our two-handed management approach and our highly involved business owners are able to interact with the client, organising committee and other conference VIPs at the highest level.

Many of our clients choose to work with us year after year, recognising the benefits of conference partner continuity, including significant cost efficiencies, stability of relationships and detailed project knowledge.

“ I have no hesitation in highly recommending African Agenda’s services to an organising committee tasked with the delivery of a stand out, world class event. ”

*Desmond Smith, Chairman,
ICA 2010
Organising Committee*

Programme and speaker management

The development of a relevant, current and stimulating programme is key to attracting delegates and meeting the educational objectives of the conference. The care with which the speakers, dignitaries, VIPs, and other programme role players are treated is equally important. African Agenda's programme and protocol team excels at efficient yet warm, forceful yet diplomatic management to ensure that you get the best out of your speakers, that their presentations meet the event's educational objectives and that they feel appreciated for their contributions and are eager to engage with the host in other capacities or at other events. From invitation to confirmation, from travel arrangements to final briefing to gift-giving, we are adept at managing personalities and making all programme role players feel comfortable and welcome.

African Agenda works with clients to develop programmes that innovatively make the most of the time and space available, and maximise delegates' educational and networking opportunities.

Marketing, materials and conference proceedings

We execute all aspects of conference promotions and publications, from marketing strategy and event branding to developing and publishing marketing materials and conference proceedings.

Printed and electronic artefacts are the single most memorable and lasting elements of a conference and exceptional conference materials designed with an appealing and cohesive identity go a long way toward attracting delegates, reinforcing the conference personality, creating a sense of community and cementing the legacy of the conference and its educational objectives.

African Agenda specialises in the development of conference documentation – from marketing material to website copy to endorsement letters, from the call for papers to final proceedings. With a warm yet professional voice and exceptional attention to detail African Agenda can write, collect or encourage as necessary all the content, and in the publishing phase will manage the design process as well as the printers, deadlines and proofing.

Registration services

The enquiry and registration process is the delegate's first contact with the conference and a good experience here will colour their perception of the whole event. The old advertising line is especially apt: "you never get a second chance to make a first impression", and African Agenda takes this to heart with a secretariat always exhibiting an efficient and friendly phone demeanour, a quick response to all enquiries, "plain English" correspondence, and the exceptionally accurate capture of personal, housing and financial data and invoicing. Every registration is received and processed with individual attention to ensure a seamless and friendly experience from the very first impression.

Sustainability and greening

Through our involvement with the Event Greening Forum and interaction with international partners, we are well versed in the practical and cost-effective application of international best-practice sustainability measures to conference management. We will guide you through the implementation of sustainability initiatives in areas such as venue, transport, accommodation, audio-visual, food and beverage service, exhibition, conference materials, marketing, communications and carbon offsetting. African Agenda also applies sustainable business practices throughout our own office.

"The most significant contributing factor to the success of the programme was the logistical and co-ordination support provided by African Agenda in the development, monitoring and tracking of all the contributions involved in the programme."

*Peter Withey,
Programme Chair, ICA 2010*

"I wanted to directly express my appreciation for the excellent job that was done by all in planning and executing the congress. I thought that it was one of the best meetings of any kind that I have ever attended."

*Dave Ingram, Willis Re;
delegate and presenter,
ICA 2010*

"The best decision we have made in the execution of this colloquium was the appointment of African Agenda."

*Emile Stipp, Chairman, IAAHS
2007 Organising Committee*



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