It was all about Connecting the People at the DWR Village at Mediatech

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Seeing a floorplan come to life was an absolute pleasure for the team at DWR Distribution who participated in Mediatech 2026 hosted at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit in Johannesburg, South Africa from 30 June to 2 July.

The DWR Village included 32 of DWR’s suppliers, each hosting their own stand, and a

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performance area featuring a show, ‘Tungsten & Diode,’ that ran three times a day. This year, the DWR theme was a circuit board, and, more than anything, the emphasis was on connecting people: a place where visitors to the show, over 60 international guests, and the DWR team could catch up under one LED roof!

“The last Mediatech was hosted in 2019 just before Covid-19, and when Simon and Claire Robinson decided to bring the expo back to life, we were in,” explained Duncan Riley of DWR Distribution. “In 2024, we were about to move into a new warehouse and decided to use the empty space to host our own little expo titled ‘Back to the Future’. We invited our suppliers to come to South Africa and created an event for our industry to experience new gear and equipment, and to meet suppliers, especially as people seemed hungry to have this type of experience again. We saw this concept work so well that, when it came to Mediatech, we knew that if we again included our suppliers, it would be an opportunity to create a smaller version of an international trade show, build brand awareness and importantly introduce visitors to the wonderful people behind equipment. With the last Mediatech being seven years ago, there were so many young people who had not experienced this kind of vibe and our aim was to create something that would make them go wow!”

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Making the DWR village literally required a village!!! For one, the team decided to book the covered viewing deck at Kyalami, which, under normal circumstances, would provide people with an open-air panoramic view of the Gauteng skyline. This in itself posed challenges. Knowing the event would be held in winter, even though Joburg winters are generally mild, it was decided to block the space with flats provided by Dream Sets to make it warmer and darker. The massive windows leading up the stairs were blocked out with vinyl for the show.

The other challenge was the shape. It was more of an L-shape and included curves, so DWR’s Jade Manicom created a floorplan that would ultimately undergo 18 revisions, with tweaks and even some latecomer exhibitors, to create something everyone on the DWR team was exceptionally proud of. Everyone definitely got their steps in hauling everything up and down the stairs during load in and strike.

The 32 suppliers each came up with a concept for how they envisioned their stand would to look.

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DWR then appointed companies, including Gearhouse, MGG, Pure Event Gear, Dream Sets, Sets Drapes Screens, Pure Event Gear, FogTech, Stage Effects and AV Unlimited to bring the vision to life. “It was almost like creating an expo within an expo!” says Robert Izzett from DWR. “We knew it would take just a bit of orchestration and we involved Robert Hoey from Dream Sets as Project Manager to oversee things. DWR is made up of many individuals from the industry, whether that’s lighting designers, audio engineers, or Pro AV professionals and we knew we could pull off the event. But having Robert Hoey on board, and knowing he had worked on many large-scale productions, gave us peace of mind.”

What pulled all the stands together and really looked phenomenal was the LED floor and LED ceiling provided by Stage Effects which covered part of the walkways on the stand. “The content on these screens played a crucial role. We had sold the idea to all our suppliers that we were creating a circuit board theme, and we needed content that would be striking and effective. We were thrilled when Andew Timm and Adino Trapani from AJT Creatives came on board to create their magic.” AJT created content for the DWR arch entrance, as well as floor and ceiling graphics featuring loops of various designs, from circuit boards and trees to flags representing different African countries, which changed periodically.”

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On the performance side, Michael Taylor-Broderick and David Gouldie created ‘*Tungsten & Diode’*, a show beautifully performed by Aaron McIlroy and Kirsty Ndawo. The content was created by AJT Creative, with special thanks to ShowTex for providing the PepperScrim for projection. The production featured a stage suspended 5m above the floor that could also tilt and pivot, using Moveket technology. The Moveket system comprised of six Moveket VMC 500 KG BGV C1 Variable Speed Hoists controlled by a MoveKet Kes Expert-T 111.

Outside, the work continued. “We really wanted something special for the Mediatech outdoor audio demo area, which featured a shootout between various brands,” said Kyle Robson of DWR. “We sponsored a DiGiCo Quantum 225DS, which was used to feed signal to all the different demo systems on show.” The demo featured exceptional audio from the GTX range, RCF’s flagship high-performance line array system.

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“This was a true team effort,” said Bruce Riley of DWR. “There’s no way we could single out just one person. What Mediatech did reaffirm is that we have an incredible team who pulled this all together with smiles on their faces, that we have wonderful clients who helped make it happen, and amazing suppliers without whom none of this would have been possible.”

The exhibitors who participated in the DWR Village stand included Robe Lighting, Panasonic, MA Lighting, Luminex Network Intelligence, Claypaky, Green Hippo, Barco, ATEN, Vari-Lite, Audix, Unilumin, ADJ Lighting, Fenix, RCF, Prolyte, ASM Steuerungstechnik, ShowTex, Astera, DirectOut Technologies, DiGiCo, KLANG Technologies, Fourier Audio, Sound Devices, L-Acoustics, Roland Professional A/V, Theatrixx, Epson, Doughty, MDG, CHAINMASTER, MOVEKET, König & Meyer, Klotz, Samsung, Visual Productions, LSC Control Systems, and Anolis.

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Duncan Riley concludes, “The three days of Mediatech were more than we could have hoped for. Thank you to Simon and Claire for hosting the event, to our incredible team and suppliers, and, most importantly, to everyone who visited the DWR Village. Not many South Africans, or people from across Africa, have the chance to attend international trade shows. For some, the cost of international travel is simply not affordable, while others face challenges with passports and travel logistics. We wanted to create an opportunity for our local industry to meet and engage with leading international suppliers right here at home.”

The heart of DWR’s Village was simply connecting people by bringing the international industry and the local market together. Seeing people connect, share ideas, and build relationships was what it was all about. DWR was especially thrilled to see so many young people attend, as well as family members of staff who came to support the team and experience something special. It really did take a village – and what a village it was.

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