

Lifting the Bar on Rigging Safety Across Africa



Geraldo Papo of dB Audio Namibia, Char-Anne Husselmann of dB Audio Namibia, Blessing Bero of Events Evolution

Nicole Barnes from Entertainment Technology reports

DWR Distribution has established a reputation for hosting a diverse range of training courses to empower local technicians across disciplines over the past few years. One of the most celebrated and sought-after causes is the annual Prolyte Rigging Course, delivered by internationally renowned rigging authority, Rinus ‘Rhino’ Bakker.

The annual training course covers critical areas in event rigging including safety, maintenance, lifting materials, force calculations, and how to understand load tables, among other topics. The DWR Prolyte Rigging Course attracts technicians from across multiple disciplines and includes both theoretical and practical training.

Char-Anne Husselmann of dB Audio Namibia explains that the course provided a valuable opportunity to ensure dB Audio Namibia remains compliant with the highest possible health and safety standards: “I wanted to come and learn more about health and safety because our company places a lot of importance on this. For me, it has been a great eye-opener, because I’m on site most of the time with the technicians and have come to realise how important compliance with safety standards is to prevent accidents from happening.” She goes on to reflect: “The problem is that we see people putting on events without knowing what could happen if things go wrong when you haven’t worked according to standards.”



Kojo Poku, CEO and head of technical at Big Ideaz, Ghana

Zimbabwean lighting designer, Blessing Bero of Events Evolution, states that the rigging course has provided him with the opportunity to develop his skills in his chosen discipline: "I am passionate about lighting design, but you need the connection between what you are drawing and how to make the concept technically feasible, and safe. I am excited to learn more about how to design while keeping in mind the rigging requirements and safety standards needed to bring my ideas to life."

Geraldo Papo of dB Audio Namibia points out the need for training and skill development to ensure that companies throughout the region practice responsible rigging: "In my experience, we work to the best of our ability to do things the right way, but, because of lack of knowledge, we still take risks – without even realising it. During the training, however, Rinus mentions things, and you reflect on past projects and realise that there is a lot of space for improvement. This training has really sharpened my safety awareness."



Rinus Bakker

The uptake of rigging training by members of the technical events industry not only bodes well for safety at events in the region but across the whole African continent. Kojo Poku, CEO and head of technical at Ghanaian events company, Big Ideaz, explains that he has seen an increase in demand for larger-scale events in Ghana – but the lack of adequate venues in the country remains a challenge. “We have only one venue in Ghana that can support a roof hang – and, therefore, we have to use ground support for the majority of indoor events. Understanding how to achieve the best and safest rig is of vital importance to create the environment needed for the industry to grow. The training that we have been offered here has the potential to capacitate our whole team and will allow us to take the company to the next level.”



Duncan Riley, director of DWR Distribution, states: “One of the most important things about the training that Rinus provides is that it is brand agnostic and anybody involved in the technical side of the events industry stands to benefit. We are extremely lucky to be able to draw on Rinus’ depth of experience and incredible knowledge to empower our industry.”

The Prolyte Rigging Course, currently underway at DWR Distribution’s Johannesburg offices, will conclude on 02 February.

