

Major players SACIA and TPSA merge

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The two leading organisations representing the audio visual industry in Southern Africa, SACIA (Southern African Communications Industry Association) and the TPSA (Technical Production Services Association) have merged so that they can present a stronger front to clients and associates, and a louder voice to government.

“We’ve merged in order to represent our industry more effectively in engagements with government and regulatory bodies - and in order to better serve our members”, says SACIA CEO, Kevan Jones.

While SACIA members are responsible for fixed audio visual displays such as those one sees in board rooms, shopping centre, sports arenas and houses of worship, the TPSA membership have been responsible for the spectacular effects one sees at music concerts and other similar events. Over the last few months a task group made of representatives from both the TPSA and SACIA have been crafting a proposal for the merger of the two organisations.

Both groups believe that by merging SACIA and the TPSA there is an opportunity to provide long-

term value to members, and Jones asserts that the value of this merger is already manifesting itself in direct benefits to members. “Our GEN111 AV Essentials class delivered during October was our first training programme delivered jointly with the TPSA,” he explains. “The class was aimed at AV professionals already working in industry and was hosted as part of a programme encouraging continuous professional development. About half the class were TPSA members and the feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive.”

dbAudio, a long-time TPSA member sent two delegates from Namibia, while TCH Bonisa, an events company in Johannesburg sent three delegates. “I started working as an AV technician in 2011,” relates Jesaya Johannes from dbAudio, “but our sources of information are limited in Namibia and we rely heavily on the manufacturers and distributors to help us resolve technical issues. The GEN111 ‘Essentials of AV technology’ course has allowed me to learn more in a condensed amount of time, giving me a better understanding of the science behind the equipment I use on a daily basis.”

The merger provides TPSA members with instant access to the wide range of online training programmes available to SACIA members, including specialist audio training from Syn-Aud-Con and video production training offered through Class On Demand.

“Whilst access to professional development training is important, the real value to TPSA members lies in our capacity to engage with members and industry stakeholders in a meaningful way,” explains Jones.

“We’re already planning a series of member events that’ll take place in January 2015. We’re also ramping up our engagements with government and regulatory bodies. This is particularly important in terms of the new BB-BEE Transformation Charter approved by the Department of Trade & Industry. The live events industry has been identified as a sector that has been particularly slow in embracing transformation and black economic empowerment, and government is now implementing programmes to accelerate the pace of change in the marketplace. These programmes will have a dramatic impact on established players in our marketplace. While there have been many people who’ve resisted transformation up till this point, the new regulatory framework means that companies who fail to make a commitment to the process of transformation will be severely handicapped.”

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This expanded capacity is a critical feature for Duncan Riley, chair of the TPSA special interest group within SACIA. “Over the last year the TPSA board has explored various options that would allow us to provide meaningful value to our members,” says Duncan. “This merger with SACIA stands head and shoulders above all other options we considered. SACIA has a growing membership and by forging this alliance we believe we’ll deliver real value to our own members in the live events industry.”