

Mediatech features in Mondo

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Justin Gawne, GM of the publication MONDO, gives his review of Mediatech

Mediatech in South Africa has always been a show I've wanted to visit, mainly because Africa is the last continent to be opened up as a market and South Africa seems the easy and safe option to have a look at what the market may offer? The combination of the show being biennial and its previous dates meant I always missed it; this year, and its 5th incarnation, was to prove to be the exception and with the Football World Cup being held in South Africa next year was certainly a good time to see the market.

Mediatech is a diverse show in that it incorporates a multitude of different industries from musical instruments through to high end broadcast technology, this diversity perfectly reflects the size of the South African market and that any one of these industries probably couldn't support a specific trade show. The show was held in the Coca Cola Dome in an area called Northgate which is a suburb of Johannesburg, a really impressive venue that is now used for exhibitions and concerts, but was originally designed as a in car hi-fi installation shop!

This year's event did certainly benefit from the World Cup being held next year, though talk on the show floor was of contracts being delayed or not even being issued, even though the event was around the corner and that kit would have to be ordered in, there was certain optimism that they would be forthcoming. Aside from the 10 stadia being built, Prosound being the main beneficiary having secured 9 of them, there is the requirement for outside areas for fans without tickets and they were going to need significant PA systems and large screens. All of this technology was on display in the outdoor demo zones at the exhibition and sat well with the OB vans and satellite ground stations that reflected the other side of the event.

Within the halls a number of stands had really made the effort, AVL Distribution, distributors for Eurotruss, Digidesign, CLS and Doughty amongst others won a Gold Award for their 2 tier stand. Tadco, run by the irrepressible Simon Oates, yes brother of the Irrepressible Tony Oates set out a village feel with different companies set up around and contributing to the Tadco bar, certainly the best place to end up at in the afternoon and a definite draw to the punter. DWR Distribution another winner of a Gold Stand Award showed its complete range of brands including Vari*Lite, Robe, MA Lighting, TMB, LTM to name but a few and also had considerable support from a number of brand representatives, Duncan Riley of DWR said "The interest was incredible, and the show was an ideal networking opportunity for us to catch up with many existing clients and make lots of new contacts. While you can have close relationships with your clients, they still don't necessarily realise or see all the products you can offer. Mediatech was our chance to show them".

Interestingly for a country that has had a history of high tech manufacturing, mainly out of necessity because of the apartheid era embargos, there were few home grown products, two exceptions were Vusa truss who were displaying their aluminum trussing solutions; also Stage Audio Works had a new range of Stage decks, speaker bags and stage boxes.

With 115 exhibitors the show took up two thirds of the dome's floorspace and given the record breaking attendance at this year's event of 6779 the show felt busy on all the three days, The show also had a comprehensive conference running alongside it with sessions on Sound Design in Film through to working with Apples Final Cut software.

Numbers were more than likely up because of the impending World Cup but it shows the size of the market, a bit disappointingly for me was the low level of other African countries attending but it is after all a domestic show and inter African travel just isn't as easy as in Europe. The next Mediatech will be 2011 so see you there.

