

Norwood Productions Invests

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“It’s all about the people,” states Chris Norwood of Norwood Productions, explaining his people-first management style, and echoing a phrase actively embraced and promoted by Robe’s South African distributor, DWR.

However, good, reliable and flexible kit also helps a business thrive, and Johannesburg-based Norwood Productions has invested in some of Robe’s most compact fixture ranges to further the company’s growth – starting with LED Beam 100s and now also including LEDBeam 150s and LEDBeam 350s, with some Spikies on order.

The Robe purchases – eight of each fixture – are perfect for the current size and scale of the events they are providing with top notch technical production.

Norwood Productions is a relatively new business, founded five years ago by Chris who before that worked in the industry for other companies.

In this short time, the company survived through the pandemic which also inspired new ideas and provided impetus to reach out in new directions. Currently, around 90% of their business is dedicated to delivering high quality corporate and industrial events, brand activations and product launches, with around 10% taken up supplying music concerts, dance events and other more rock ‘n’ roll activities which are at the heart of their roots.

In addition to the business events for which Chris and his team have built a great reputation, Norwood Productions now has a green screen studio and artist rehearsal rooms at its premises in addition to their own offices and warehouse space. Post-Covid, they have been proactively pushing diversity and embracing new sectors including streaming, video, and commercial shoots.

The first Robe products were LEDBeam 100s purchased when the company launched in 2018, and these are still going strong five years later after being in constant use.

The LEDBeam 150s and LEDBeam 350s are also out on all the bigger shows and events, adding greater scope and adaptability for any lighting requirements.

“It’s been a good, solid investment that’s helped us create imaginative lighting,” he confirms, adding that all their kit gets well maintained and looked after.

Robe was a “natural choice,” he notes, not just because of the “amazing” service and support from DWR but as a quality brand that is frequently internationally specified and generally accepted. While there were other cheaper options on the table, the outlay has been “well worth it,” he confirms, adding that these smaller Robe fixtures are “perfect” for most of their current work, whether it is live events or studio / camera-based projects.

His two lighting specialists, Kyle Thompson and Bongani Giania also enjoy the Robe fixtures for which they use MA Dot2 control consoles.

The key to delivering the best corporate experiences is adding touches of theatricality and a bit of rock ‘n’ roll, so having the right equipment to assist the process is a part of Norwood Productions’

success.

Also vitally important in the equation is the crew. They are “the company’s ambassadors on site, and while the client might not remember the brand of kit used in their show, they almost always remember the people!” stated Chris ... and this is why ‘human capital’ is so important to his business model.

Chris is a firm believer in elevating the role of technicians. He thinks technical staff are often under-appreciated and wants to see the “many smart and hard-working men and women of this industry getting well paid, respected and enjoying a decent lifestyle,” as well as providing opportunities and environments in which they can excel.

All Norwood Productions’ staff are multi-skilled with good knowledge of the principal fields – audio, lighting, and video – as well as how the disciplines coalesce, and they will often work across different departments when delivering a production. Most staff have been with him since day one of the company and have been trained and increased their experience show-by-show.

Absolutely passionate about the entertainment production industry, Chris started his own journey first as a nightclub doorman, then as a drum tech before getting into AV more broadly.

Photo: By Louise Stickland, shows Chris Norwood (back row, centre) and some of his amazing team