

2011 Business Opportunities & Franchise Expo gets under way

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The 2011 Business Opportunities and Franchise Expo (BOFE) opened its doors yesterday, Thursday, 15 September 2011, at the Coca-Cola Dome in Johannesburg, drawing scores of people looking for new business opportunities or ways to grow existing ones, while speakers geared up to teach business lessons and exhibitors unveil the content of their 'safes' to the world.



"This platform enables aspirant entrepreneurs, suppliers, customers, investors and funders to come together and explore a variety of investment prospects and franchise options, enhanced by workshop programmes and extensive networking opportunities," the organisers said, adding that about 10 000 people are expected to attend the four-day event.

Research from last year's event showed that 72% of the 9200 visitors were interested in buying a business, while 62% who attended had funds readily available to invest, according to the organisers.

As some people were busy contemplating various products exhibited at over 300 stands, others converged at the Business Buzz Zone, where they were hoping to listen attentively to business experts' lectures on the do's and don'ts of entrepreneur life.

"Don't focus on the money because you will never get there, but be brutal on the money," Mike Anderson, National Small Business Chamber (NSBC) CEO, told the audience.

"Network all the times and build a network of quality and positive individuals."

To those who were planning to buy a franchise, Anderson said they should involve their entire families so that they can be behind them in whatever they would do.

"Keep your integrity intact and focus on passing on value and helping others," he pleaded.

Consumers are king

Delivering his presentation titled Communicating Change, Ryan Hogarth described the 21st century as the world of communications revolution where the consumer has the power.

"The world is now globalised, with no barriers, stressed and tech-filled, cooperative, sharing and collaborating, and idealised (ideas of customers). What customers want becomes more important.

"Be afraid of your customers because those are the folks who have got the money, your competitors will never send you money," Hogarth told the audience, quoting from the founder of Amazon.com.

Down to business

"BOFE serves as the ideal platform to stimulate business growth and motivate both current and aspiring entrepreneurs through direct interaction with some of South Africa's most influential speakers who will host informative seminars and workshops," Thebe Exhibitions & Projects Group GM Glynis Anderson said.

Thebe Exhibitions & Projects is sponsoring the 2011 BOFE, alongside Standard Bank and Eskom, and media partner *The Star*.

BOFE 2011 also drew some international entrepreneurs, some of whom told Bizcommunity.com that they came to learn and seek new business opportunities.

Ghana's Juddy Donkor-Baah, MD of 4DB Services Limited, a recruitment, HR and training firm based in Kumasi, said: "A friend told me about this event and I registered on the net at home. I came to get a few tips on how I can grow my business, and also to seek new business partnerships and opportunities, as my company plans to set up primary and high schools in Kumasi."

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Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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