

Securex makes the grade

By Andrew Seldon

The big news at Securex was that next year's event will be IFSEC South Africa after *CMP Information*

acquired a 50% stake in the local show. South Africa now becomes part of the global IFSEC family. This can only bode well for the future of the exhibition and provide the local security industry with more opportunities and potentially more competition.

Hi-Tech Security Solutions (HSS) asked a few exhibitors to provide us with their opinions of the 2008 event to gauge their satisfaction and find out what made it work for them, or what was missing. Overall, the local security industry was pleased with the 2008 exhibition, although, as always, there are a few concerns and preferences for future exhibitions.

Saflec Systems' Barend Keyser says the company opted for a bigger stand this year and as a result got to see more people, both existing clients and new leads.

Regal's Mel Labuschagne says the show was a success for his company. His positive view is not as a result of seeing more people

"Securex is an excellent venue for HID to further strengthen our relationship with the South African sales and integration channel," said Duncan Cooke, regional director EMEA for HID Global. "This event not only allows HID to demonstrate new technology, but also provides the company with an opportunity to meet with the end-users who drive innovation within the region."

at the show, but because Regal took the strategic decision to change its focus at Securex 2008 and expose all its products to attendees instead of only a subset and to concentrate more on its high-end communications solutions. Moreover, Labuschagne notes that Regal was able to convey the message that it was a one-stop-shop, providing products as well as solutions. Many of the business people who stopped at the stand were more interested in solutions than individual products, making this change in strategy the right one for the show.

Another regular exhibitor that again took a large stand in 2008 was Impro. The company's Barry East was pleased with the event, but noted a change in the type of visitor as there were more end users than trade representatives on the floor. East sees this as a change in the decision matrix

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in the security industry as users are making brand decisions for themselves instead of simply taking the advice of their solution providers. And as users become more knowledgeable, the onus is on the industry to improve its knowledge and provide better advice and service.

Therma Card production manager, Wendy Anderson: "Securex is always a good way for us to reach our target audience. We made new contacts in African markets, particularly in the SADC countries, and are anticipating new business from these leads."

Impro has geared up for this change and is able to handle direct user enquiries as well as any technical issues its channel raises. Due to the high turnover of staff in the channel Impro retains its own skilled technical employees to deal with high-end queries and issues its channel partners are not always able to handle. Of course, this doesn't mean it sells direct to end users, but is in a position to assist its channel in dealing with queries and concerns.

Keyser feels there were less people at this year's show, although the numbers seem to indicate the same as last year. [The organisers said there were 5634 visitors. – Ed.] He also notes that most attendees were from the security industry, whereas last year saw more potential customers from government, financial institutions and other interested vertical markets. East agrees that numbers were not all that encouraging, but he notes this is in line with international trends. He says the number of

"In terms of visitor quality, our stand pumped like never before," says Jack Edery, managing director of Elvey Security Technologies. "The organisers clearly made an effort to target their marketing efforts to attract visitors from the trade, which we appreciated."



people was steady as compared to last year, but the industry has grown by about 15%, an increase in feet would be welcome. People are also using the Internet to educate themselves today, with the result that fewer are going to trade shows.

Axis marketing manager, Tami Alves: "It was a fantastic show for us. We've been here for six years running and this year was probably the best. The visitors to our stand were of a far higher calibre than in the past. We found that we did not have to explain what our products did, but were more involved in engaging with visitors on the level of understanding the brand itself."

Overall, Keyser notes his satisfaction with Securex 2008 and Saflec will be back in 2009. Labuschagne was also happy with the process, although he was somewhat perturbed that a company with a substantial stand and multiple onsite staff should only be provided with one parking ticket. Perhaps the organisers could deal with that one in 2009.

One thing East would like to see at future shows, however, is more attendance by people from African countries. Securex and next year's IFSEC South Africa are the only shows of this nature on the continent and should therefore include more of the growing economies to the north.

The few minor criticisms aside, Securex 2008 proved to be a great success for all concerned. So great, in fact, that industry is now looking forward to seeing what IFSEC South Africa 2009 will bring to the security industry and its customers. IFSEC South Africa will take place from 1-3 July 2009 at the Sandton Convention Centre.

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