

## SA-SHIA? ... SA-SHEE-A? ... NO, IT'S PRONOUNCED SACK-EE-AA!

Everything you need to know about SACIA



Kevan Jones the Executive Director of the Southern African Communications Industries Association (SACIA) is a man with many strings to his bow.

Although his roots are in publishing he became interested in the AV world when he presented a TV version of one of his magazines. From there he launched AV Specialist – a magazine that is distributed in over 40 countries. Eight years ago when SACIA started to evolve into what it is today Kevan was involved but realised that while he was strong in media, he needed to improve his knowledge of trade associations. He joined the American Society of Association Executives as well as the Institute of Association Management (UK) and obtained industry certification from both bodies. Kevan shared his passion for running the trade association in the AV sector in a Q & A with PROMAG.

**PROMAG:** What does the executive director do day to day?

Kevan Jones: Firstly, I work on Training and Skills development. We offer an active training programme with two or three programmes per month. Some international and some developed locally for the industry. Secondly,

I spend time promoting ethical business practices. Speaking to people about ethics and how we embed it in the way members operate. Thirdly, representing our industry at forums and events worldwide. In the next few months we'll be busy exhibiting and speaking at SATCOM Africa, Mediatech, InfoComm and IBC, as well as engaging with government departments, regulatory bodies and non-profit organisations.

**PROMAG:** What is the role of the Chairman of the SACIA Board?

KJ: The Board defines SACIA's strategic objectives at the beginning of the year. I strive to reach them and the Board oversees my execution. I have a very close working relationship with our Chairman Bruce Genricks. I approach him with queries and for guidance, we speak at least once a week and swap emails on a daily basis.

**PROMAG:** In one line: what is SACIA?

KJ: SACIA is a body dedicated to promoting professional standards and ethical practices in the communications industry in SA.

**PROMAG:** How many members belong to SACIA?

KJ: Forty, but there are about 100 potential members that we'd like to sign up.

**PROMAG:** Can individuals join?

KJ: No, SACIA is limited to corporate membership only.

**PROMAG:** What does membership cost?

KJ: There's a once-off joining fee of R5000 and an annual fee of R5000. However there is a scheme where we allow start-ups and black owned businesses to join at a reduced fee. We need to promote diversity.

**PROMAG:** What does SACIA offer its members?

KJ: Three things: firstly, access to training and skills development programmes otherwise not available through any other source. Secondly, networking opportunities that allow industry players to engage with each other in a safe and positive environment. Thirdly, industry representation to government and regulatory bodies.

**PROMAG:** What does SACIA offer clients of members?

KJ: We want the SACIA logo to become synonymous with trust and excellence in the AV sector. To create an environment where clients who are investing in AV solutions can invest with confidence when doing business with a SACIA member. Our slogan is : Who do you call when things go wrong?

**PROMAG:** When did the SACIA Code of Conduct come into existence?

KJ: When Bruce Genricks became Chairman of the Board in May 2012. We looked at other codes of conduct and we contacted the Ethics Institute of SA to help us draft a code of conduct that would be relevant to members of the industry.

**PROMAG:** How enforceable is it?

KJ: SACIA is a voluntary organisation so it's an aspirational code. There are disciplinary measures built into the process that encourage members to abide by the conditions or face expulsion if they don't.

**PROMAG:** What constitutes unethical behaviour?

KJ: Obvious things like bribery and dishonesty, but also things like falsely claiming to have skills when required training has not been completed, or falsely claiming to represent a brand or agency when it is not the case.

**PROMAG:** What does ProAV mean?

KJ: Professional AV as opposed to consumer AV, for example, home theatre.

**PROMAG:** What do potential members need to know about training offered by SACIA?

KJ: Our training has specific relevance to the local AV and broadcast industry. It is presented in alliance with respected trade associations. Our training is backed up by Internationally recognised certification. We assist people to obtain the InfoComm Certified Technology Specialist (CTS) Certificate. There are 8700 CTS certified technicians worldwide, but only 30 in SA, so we have some work to do.

**PROMAG:** What is the greatest value-add of SACIA?

KJ: The real value of trade associations becomes evident when organisations begin to realise they achieve more by working together than they can achieve whilst working independently of each other. The real value SACIA offers is that it allows professionals to get together and share resources to solve common problems.

Check what SACIA can do for you by going to their website:

<http://www.sacia.org.za/>

