

MEDIA RELEASE

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NATIONAL KAIZEN CHAMPIONS CROWNED

Duys Engineering Group and SJM Flex were named Kaizen Champions at the annual Kaizen Seminar and awards in Port Elizabeth today (28 March 2019).

The KAIZEN Seminars are held on an annual basis (since 2014) alternating between Gauteng and The Eastern Cape. Call for papers are sought from all suppliers – with specific improvements activities using Kaizen – “Change for the better” and has a great focus on shop floor employees and operator think tanks implementing kaizen projects within the work place. AIDC Supports suppliers on its flagship programme TPM and/or TPS – Supported by the JICA Japan International Cooperation Agency. Standard QRM Quarterly Review Meetings are held with Industry and suppliers to showcase kaizen activities, partly to prepare presentations for the yearly seminars, also sharing ideas and improvements for participating suppliers at the review meetings.

There were 15 suppliers who attended the seminar, 2 of them travelling from other regions and the rest from the Eastern Cape, as well as a local Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM).

In the Operator Category (Kaizens initiated by operators) Duys Engineering Group, a heavy engineering company with plants across the country won 1st place, with SJM Flex and Continental Contitech in 2nd and 3rd places respectively.

In the Management Category (Kaizens initiated by management or engineer) SJM Flex, a Port Elizabeth-based manufacturer of flexible couplings for the export market claimed first prize, followed by Duys Engineering Group and Auto Industrial Machining.

AIDC Eastern Cape CEO, Hoosain Mahomed said the seminar, aside from the awards, also enabled industry to learn from peers how organisations are using Kaizens as a core strategy to improve operational excellence. This programme sits well with the Automotive master plan to drive global competitiveness of our suppliers, fellow suppliers at the event showed great interest to become part of the seminar as participating suppliers. The continuous improvement culture is the key to competitiveness and suppliers are eager to participate in future seminars.

The CEO further mentioned that the seminar was attended by management but that presentations were uniquely made by shop floor operators of the representing companies because "Kaizens are largely operator driven, with ownership on the shop floor." Mr Louw from SJM who joined the best practice tour to India shared with the delegates the experiences and applications of kaizen – on equipment that are in some cases as old as 30 to 40 years.

Lean Institute Africa Director Anton Grutter told delegates that the importance of Lean thinking and practice was highlighted by "an increasingly complex business environment with non-linear

consequences to decisions - attached to the idea that management decision making is generally imperfect."

He said the use of routines, tools and measures - generally part of the Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) Cycle -- beginning at management level, was essential for effective decision-making, problem solving and sustainment improvement.

Nelson Mandela University Head of Kaizen Department, Karl van der Merwe stressed the importance of organisational culture.

"A Lean culture in an organisation is required to support continuous improvement and Kaizens but this needed to be fostered and deliberately considered by managers," van der Merwe said.

Short-listed award nominees largely emanate from the AIDC's shop floor improvement interventions at manufacturers across South Africa.

The AIDC is mandated by government to assist the country's manufacturing sector become more globally competitive.

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