

AUGUST 2016

# TRAVEL BUYER

FOR SA CORP

## +Meet

## Brexit

What does  
it mean  
for your  
travellers?

.....  
Mining  
slump  
hits travel  
budgets  
.....

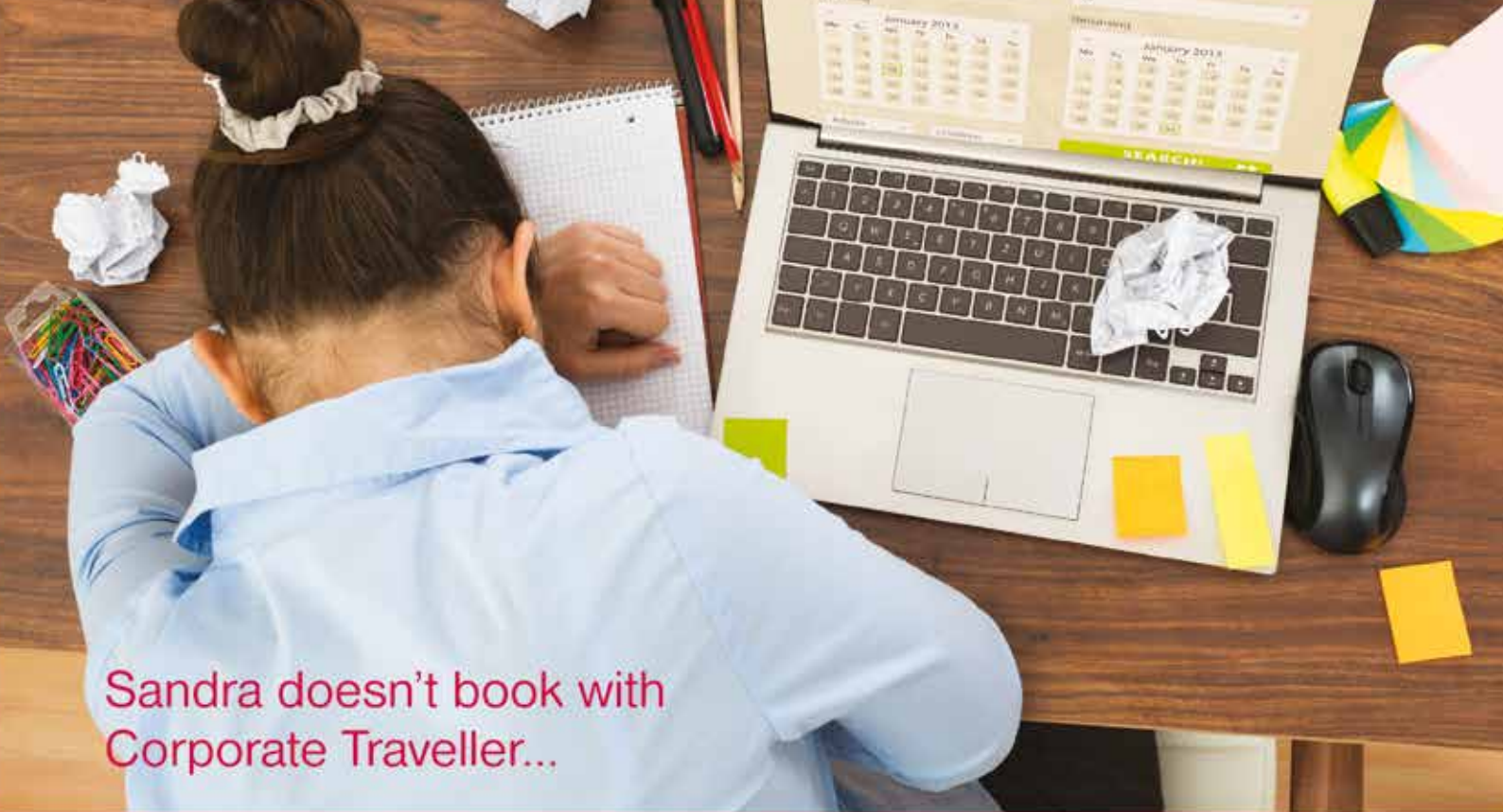
Menlyn set  
to become SA's  
next MICE hub

## HOW TO

*take the sting out of travel savings*

.....  
***T-System's Richard Whitfield  
takes the time to earn travellers' trust***  
.....





Sandra doesn't book with  
Corporate Traveller...

Jessica does.



When your time is precious  
it makes sense to bring an **expert** on board.

With Corporate Traveller you'll get:

- ✓ Personal service from a dedicated travel expert
- ✓ Free after-hours support
- ✓ Guaranteed cost savings through our global negotiating strength
- ✓ Flexible payment options
- ✓ Clear travel cost reporting at your fingertips
- ✓ No fixed contract - unless you would like one

Visit our website or call us today and forget the hassles of business travel planning.

Call 0877 40 50 91

[corporatetraveller.co.za](http://corporatetraveller.co.za)

**CORPORATE  
TRAVELLER**

Bring an **expert** on board



## Editor's note

**W**hile the tightening of purse strings, particularly when it comes to corporate travel, is nothing new, it does feel as if the topic is being tackled with renewed vigour, perhaps due to the ever-looming threat of a downgrade and the volatility of our currency.

What I've found particularly interesting though, is how innovative travel buyers are being in terms of finding ways to cut down travel spend without travellers having to feel that they're sacrificing their comfort to improve the company's bottomline.

This month, we spoke to **Richard Whitfield**, travel buyer for ITC company, T-Systems. Incredibly, he's managed to cut travel costs by 50%, simply by introducing better systems (including an online booking tool) and whittling down vendors and channelling business to a preferred list, putting him in a position to negotiate great rates and value adds.

We are delving into the subject of travel budgets in even more depth, with a dedicated feature that looks more closely at some of the ways travel buyers can take the sting out of savings for travellers – ranging from cutting down on the

number of nights spent travelling, through to allowing travellers to stay with friends and family and the company paying over the host a fee instead of paying for hotel accommodation.

Of course, there are also some things travel buyers should never skimp on, particularly when it comes to duty of care. Read the travel budgets feature for a list of all the non-negotiables when it comes to duty-of-care inclusions.

Also in this issue, we're taking a closer look at travel management for the mining industry. This highly specialised industry is littered with complexities and the potential to incur exorbitant costs, so we've spoken to some of the TMCs with expertise in navigating this 'minefield'.

Then, we're putting the spotlight on Gauteng, looking at the fast-developing hub of Menlyn, which is set to become one of the province's main centres for MICE. There's also no shortage of activities to add on to your conference, and we provide a 48-hour guide of suggestions to fill up the free slots in your event programme.

Keep reading!

**Sue van Winsen**  
(suev@nowmedia.co.za)

## COVER

**Richard Whitfield** tells *Travel Buyer* about why he believes relationships are more important than ever when it comes to corporate travel. Cover photograph by **Shannon Van Zyl**.

### News 2

- What does Brexit mean for SA travellers?
- Govt calls for TMC bids
- What you missed at the Saaci Congress 2016

### Profile 10

- Taking the time to earn travellers' trust

### Meetings 12

- Menlyn on track to become Gauteng's next hub
- 48 hours in Gauteng

### On the radar - Travel Budgets 16

- Budgets may be lean but not necessarily mean

### On the radar - Travel Management for the Mining Industry 22

- Mining slump hits travel budgets

### Deal Detective 24

- Travelinfo's latest top travel deals

**PUBLISHER** Kate Nathan **GROUP PUBLISHER** David Marsh **DEPUTY PUBLISHER** Natasha Schmidt **CONSULTING EDITOR** Sue van Winsen **EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS** Linda van der Pol, Liesl Venter, Michelle Colman, Darise Foster, Taryn Nightingale **DESIGN & LAYOUT** Tanya Lowery **PHOTOGRAPHER** Shannon Van Zyl **SALES** katen@nowmedia.co.za **ADVERTISING CO-ORDINATOR** Anthea Lucas **CIRCULATIONS** subs@nowmedia.co.za **PRINTED BY** Juka Printing (Pty) Ltd **PUBLISHED BY** Travel & Trade Publishing (Pty) Ltd, Now Media Centre, 32 Fricker Rd, Illovo Boulevard, Illovo, Johannesburg, PO Box 55251, Northlands, 2116, South Africa. Tel: +27 11 327 4062, Fax: +27 11 327 4094, e-mail: travelbuyer@nowmedia.co.za, web: www.travelbuyer.co.za



Brought to you by Now Media, *Travel Buyer + Meet* is a professional travel publication aimed at South African travel procurement decision-makers in travel-buying companies. This publication aims to reflect an unbiased perspective of the corporate travel industry offering insight and tools encouraging readers to manage their travel spend better. *Travel Buyer* is the media partner of ABTA, ACTE and the GBTA



# IS THE CORPORATE EVENT PLANNER IMPORTANT TO YOU?



Over 1 000 a day can be reached online when you advertise in

**DAILY TRAVEL & MEETINGS BUYER**

www.tam.co.za



# What does Brexit mean for SA travellers?

**T**HE rapid depreciation of the British pound in the days following the UK's vote to exit the European Union is good news for South African travellers to the UK because they will get more rands for their pounds, says economist, **Roelof Botha**.

"While the rand weakened against the dollar in the aftermath of the referendum, the pound took a dip to levels last seen three decades ago, making it cheaper for travellers to visit the UK at the moment because the pound is so weak," Botha says.

Studies done by lata reveal the

UK currency is expected to remain in the region of 10-15% weaker than would have been the case under a no-Brexit scenario, although it is expected to recover somewhat over the medium to long term. These currency fluctuations during Britain's exit from the EU will make long-term planning a bit tricky, says **Susan Thesan**, operations director of British T.I.P.S.

The free movement and working rights of EU citizens will remain unchanged for the time being, according to a White Paper released by the UK House of Commons, titled *Brexit – What Happens Next?*

What happens in practice in the longer term would depend on the approach taken by the UK government and the 27 Member States during the UK's withdrawal negotiations, the report said.

It added that, while it was possible to argue that Brexit could lead to enhanced visa options for Commonwealth nationals (including South Africans), it was not possible to state with any certainty what a post-Brexit UK immigration policy might look like.

It is also possible that Brexit could have different implications for different visa categories.

## Ethiopian launches newest aircraft

**E**THIOPIAN Airlines, which will be the first African airline to operate the Airbus A350 XWB, will eventually deploy the aircraft on its Johannesburg route.

The airline will initially use the aircraft on its Lagos and Dubai routes. With an expected delivery of another 13 A350 XWBs over the next three years, Ethiopian Airlines will soon be flying the aircraft into OR Tambo International Airport.

The aircraft offers 313 seats in economy class (in a 3-3-3 configuration) and 30 seats in business class (in 2-2-2 configuration).

**Abel Alemu**, Ethiopian Airlines regional manager for Southern Africa, said the aircraft would mainly be deployed on long-range intercontinental flights. "This includes flights to North and South America as well the Far East," he said.

"These aircraft will operate to destinations with huge passenger traffic, including Johannesburg, Lagos and Dubai," said Alemu.



PHOTO: SHANNON VAN ZYL

## Pack your bags

*Air Mauritius has changed its baggage policy to two pieces for travellers to Mauritius and all worldwide destinations with immediate effect. Economy-class travellers are allowed two pieces of luggage of 23kg each and*

*business-class travellers two pieces of 32kg each. Pictured here are Air Mauritius's Wouter Nel, sales and marketing manager Southern Africa, and Carla da Silva, regional manager for Southern Africa and Latin America.*

## Ghana delays visas on arrival

**G**HANA's visa-on-arrival policy for African citizens has not yet been implemented.

A spokesperson for the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) at Kotoko International Airport in Accra, said that travellers still needed to apply at the Ghana Embassy or High

Commission in their country of residence for a visa prior to travel. "We haven't received any official documentation as yet, which is why we haven't implemented the new measures. People who arrive without a visa do so at their own risk," he said.

Only in cases of emergency, can

## SAA enhances African network

**S**AA has enhanced its Central African route network. With effect from July 31, flights will operate from Johannesburg to Brazzaville and Pointe Noire on the same flight number.

This operation to the Republic of Congo does not utilise any domestic rights, meaning SAA does not carry any passengers between Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, or vice versa.

Flight SA084 will depart Johannesburg at 17h20 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays to arrive in Pointe Noire at 20h30. The flight will then depart Pointe Noire at 21h30 to arrive in Brazzaville at 22h30. It then departs Brazzaville at 23h30 to arrive in Johannesburg at 04h20 the following day.

SAA will continue to serve Cotonou in Benin utilising its service to Libreville, Gabon, thus introducing a new sector between Libreville and Cotonou. The airline has secured traffic rights enabling it to pick up and drop off passengers between Libreville and Cotonou in both directions.

Flight SA090 departs Johannesburg at 15h00 on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays to arrive in Libreville at 18h55, before departing at 19h45 to arrive in Cotonou at 21h55. Return flight SA091 departs Cotonou at 22h45 to arrive in Libreville at 00h55 the following day. It then departs Libreville at 01h45 to arrive in Johannesburg at 07h20.

travellers ask for a visa on arrival, according to the GIS spokesperson. However, a request for this 'entry permit' has to be filed by the Ghanaian host on behalf of the traveller with the Director of Immigration in Ghana. If granted, the 'emergency entry permit' is valid for only 14 days.

# Govt calls for TMC bids

**T**HE Treasury has published its long-awaited tender for the appointment of TMCs to provide travel management services to government.

In the tender document, Treasury stipulates that it expects to appoint an undisclosed number of TMCs from October 1 for a period of three years.

A management fee – determined by the TMC during the bidding process – will be paid to the TMC for services rendered. However, the TMCs will need to adhere to the negotiated non-commissionable fares and rates and will not be allowed to earn override commissions. They will be required to maintain an open-book policy whereby any commissions earned through the government's volumes will need to be reimbursed to government.

"Government has been receiving poor value for money

with departments overspending on their budgets as well as high incidences of unauthorised, irregular and fruitless and wasteful expenditure," Treasury said in the tender document.

In a first phase, the Treasury will select and appoint TMCs to panels on national and provincial levels. TMCs will be evaluated and scored on criteria including TMC experience and structure; quality management systems, HR management; account management; service delivery; risk management; cost management; technology; management information; financial management and customer satisfaction.

Only TMCs that reach a total score of 70% or above will be

considered.

In a second phase, the individual government organisations may issue their own tenders inviting the qualified TMCs on the respective panels to bid once their existing contracts with their current TMCs have expired.

Other requirements for TMCs applying for the tender include a commitment to paying suppliers on time; an IATA licence; and, if ticketing through a third party,

agents would need to provide proof that the third party was IATA accredited. TMCs could be asked to change GDS providers and would be expected to work overtime and during weekends and public holidays.

Travel agents worry that the

two-phased approach could take a considerable amount of time.

One travel agent, who spoke on condition of anonymity, explained that it could take several months before the provincial departments appointed TMCs under the new tender. In the meantime, non-commissionable rates are being applied by government departments while TMCs have not been able to adjust their service fees, leading to unsustainable practices.

However, the travel agent mentioned that government had finally started communicating with the trade after months of silence. "I'm cautiously optimistic, as it seems that government has opened the lines of communication. However, I will only believe it when I see that actual steps are being taken."

**Government has been receiving poor value for money with departments overspending on their budgets.**

# What you missed at Saaci Congress 2016

**T**HE Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (Saaci) hosted its 30<sup>th</sup> annual congress at The President Hotel in Mangaung from June 5 – 7. The event saw professional conference organisers, event organisers, venue representatives and stakeholders from across the country gather to discuss industry issues, while also enjoying some networking time and information-sharing opportunities.

Saaci ceo **Adriaan Leibetrau** said that initially Mangaung was a hard destination to sell to delegates, with many admitting that their attendance at the conference was their first time in Bloemfontein.

"I think there is a misperception that if a town was small a few years ago, it will still be small today. But this is the sixth biggest city in the country and the suppliers here are extremely willing and capable to provide conference organisers with everything they need," he said.

The programme content was aligned to that of Convention

Industry Council, Certified Meetings Professional and Continuing Education Unit international standards. Leibetrau says this was the aspect of the congress that took up most of his time during the preparation stage.

"In the past, we aligned our programme to international standards but not to the extent that we did this year," he says. "I am glad it paid off and we have received great feedback from delegates in attendance and via the web."

New to this year's congress were the sales and leadership masterclasses, which Leibetrau says really made the difference.

Other hot topics discussed at the congress included 'the delegate of the future', 'the ABCs of government events', 'outthinking the competitor', 'whether the sharing economy will revolutionise our industry for the better', 'exploring the changes in the expo industry that can serve to enhance conferencing and vice versa' and many more.



**We'll be the driving force behind your conferences.**

Avis' M.I.C.E. Division (meetings; incentives; conferences and events), offers you a complete transport solution for all your business needs. From group transportation to personal sedan transfers, getting everyone to an event on time has never been easier.

**Avis. We Try Harder.**

Visit [avis.co.za](http://avis.co.za), call 011 923 3441 or email [events@avis.co.za](mailto:events@avis.co.za)

**AVIS**

TB2093SD



## Oneworld change complicates multi-sector travel

**P**ASSENGERS travelling on a multi-sector oneworld itinerary will need to leave additional time between connecting flights if they are travelling on separate bookings as they may need to re-check luggage and obtain new boarding passes when connecting between alliance member airlines.

This follows oneworld's announcement that member airlines were no longer required to check passengers and their baggage through to their final destination where the itinerary includes multiple flights and multiple booking references.

Vp of corporate communications, **Michael Blunt**, says this is to avoid the service delivery problems that come with using separate tickets for different sectors. "An airline operating a sector covered

by one ticket may change the schedule for that flight, making the planned connection impossible. If the connecting flight was covered by that same booking, the airline making the schedule change would be aware of the implications for the connection. The appropriate action to maintain the customer's itinerary could be taken well in advance, not dealt with at the last minute when the customer checks in and it is often too late to put workable alternatives in place," he says.

Blunt adds that member airlines are free to offer service above and beyond the alliance minimum standard if they so choose, so some may continue to offer through check-in for customers who choose to travel on multi-sector journeys on separate bookings.

Cathay Pacific advises agents to

remind travellers opting to travel on two tickets that additional connecting time at their transfer point is required as they will need to check in again, either after landing or at the transfer point, depending on the airport's set-up and facilities. A landing visa for the transfer point might also be required, the airline said.

What's more, while customers that are 'through checked' should be looked after in times of disruption, Cathay warns that the airline is not responsible for any missed connections other than the flight it operates or connecting flights booked in the same PNR as the flight it operates.

Qantas will implement the new policy from September 1 when travellers will need to book connections as part of a single booking in order to be eligible for through check-in to their final destination.

## FlySafair launches Lanseria flights

**O**N August 1, FlySafari will launch flights out of Lanseria International Airport in Johannesburg to Cape Town and George. Bookings are open on the airline's website.

Cape Town flights will be double daily and flights to George will be on Fridays and Sundays.

"We've listened closely to what the market has been asking for and there is a distinct demand and call for us to fly from Lanseria," said **Kirby Gordon**, FlySafari vp of sales and distribution.

FlySafari will acquire two new 165-seat Boeing 737-400s to operate the Lanseria routes.

Launch fares to Cape Town are from R599 one way (including taxes) and fares to George are likely to be the same. Checked-in baggage costs R150 per bag.

## Protea enters Botswana

**P**ROTEA Hotels' first hotel in Botswana is set to open in early 2018.

The hotel will be in Gaborone, close to recently developed corporate head and government offices and retail facilities.

Comprising 160 rooms, it will feature conference, meeting and event facilities. The large ballroom can be converted into four meeting rooms, giving the hotel the ability to host up to eight meetings at any time – four in the ballroom and four in the other meeting venues.

Other facilities include a business centre, bar, restaurant, fitness centre and outdoor pool.

"This hotel represents a significant investment in the local economy and, in addition to offering new hospitality facilities, it will be appreciated because of the new employment opportunities to be created for local citizens," said **Alex Kyriakidis**, president and md, Middle East and Africa of Marriott International.



PHOTO: KATE NATHAN

## Flying high!

*Singapore Airlines' brand-new, spick and span Airbus A350 made its debut in Africa and in South Africa on Monday, June 27, when it landed at OR Tambo on its maiden flight. The airline will be using the aircraft on the SA route, initially*

*three times a week, increasing gradually to seven. Pictured here is Alvin Seah, Singapore Airlines' gm Central and Southern Africa, photographed in one of the aircraft's 42 'biggest business-class seats in the sky'.*

## Air Mauritius grows network

**A**IR Mauritius has taken another step in its strategy to expand its network with the launch of weekly flights to Tanzania.

Dar es Salaam is served every Friday by an A319 on a triangular flight operating Mauritius-Dar es Salaam-Nairobi-Mauritius.

At the recent launch of the Dar es Salaam flights, Air Mauritius chairman, **Arjoon Suddho**, said the airline had 26 weekly flights to the African continent following the addition of the new destination.

"We have launched weekly flight to Dar es Salaam in a bid to address the need for more connectivity to give travellers from Mauritius easy access to East Africa," he said.

Air Mauritius ceo, **Megh Pillay**, said the new flights would contribute to feeding the air corridor that linked Africa and Asia via the hubs of Mauritius and Singapore.

# Business Class in a class of its own.

Fly British Airways Club (business class) within southern Africa, and experience exceptional service. Including complimentary 24-hour valet parking, delicious food and drink options, and access to our award-winning SLOW lounges.

To Fly. To Serve.





# Interair SA quietly closes down

**I**NTERAIR South Africa has closed down after ending its last remaining operation – a codeshare with Air Austral between Johannesburg and Réunion – at the end of April, confirms ceo, **Gary Tokoph**.

This follows the termination of the airline's last remaining scheduled operation to Ndola, Zambia, in May last year and the death of its chairman and director, **David Tokoph**, in a plane crash in New Mexico, US in August last year.

Tokoph confirmed that all Interair flights had been cancelled and that all Interair flight data (airline code D6) on the GDSs had been blocked. He said the airline handed back its licences to the International Air Service Licensing Council. He was not prepared to comment on the reasons for the airline's demise, nor on his future plans.

Interair's codeshare partner,

Air Austral, stopped receiving passenger name lists from the airline at the end of April. It had received no official notification that the airline had closed down and Interair was not responding to queries from its codeshare partner.

However, Interair's commercial manager, **Deon Visagee**, said all D6 flight data would be removed from the GDSs after he received notification on June 28 from Airline Tariff Publishing Company (ATPC) – the data supplier of all major pricing engines – that all Interair flight data had been removed, effective June 24. *Travel Buyer* is in possession of an email confirming this from ATPC senior business analyst, **Kelly Garrison**. Amadeus senior manager marketing & communications, **Jannine Adams**, also confirmed all D6 flights had been

suspended in Amadeus.

Meanwhile, Visagee said all Interair's passenger payments had been processed through BSP and Hahn Air would be notified to terminate its eticketing partnership with Interair. He said the airline's assets, including a B737, were in the process of being sold.

Jeweller, **Robbie Schwartz**, started Interair in 1994 as part of the Interjet group of companies. It initially operated domestic services, expanding to regional services in April 1995. In 1997, it was saved from insolvency by David Tokoph, a US citizen from El Paso, Texas, who was previously md of Aero Zambia and who was repeatedly linked by the media to arms dealing in Africa. As an Iata member, Interair operated scheduled regional services and charters from Johannesburg to West Africa and Zambia.

## LCC to launch Cape Town – Vic Falls flights?

**A**FRICAN carrier, fastjet, is looking at launching flights between Cape Town and Victoria Falls.

**Richard Bodin**, fastjet coo, said the route was still in the early phases and flights would be launched in the fourth quarter of this year at the earliest, although a later date was foreseeable.

According to Bodin, the airline's routes from Johannesburg to Zimbabwe continue to see growth, especially its flights to Victoria Falls. The airlines flies a double-daily service to Harare and to Victoria Falls three times a week. It also services Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar in Tanzania.

## Australia changes visa process

**S**OUTH African travellers are now required to provide biometric data when applying for an Australian visa.

Previously, agents could make the application on the client's behalf by completing an application online. "The application is still submitted and loaded online, after which a request to set up an appointment is immediately made available," says **Debbie Nicholson**, managing member of Visas and Passports Unlimited. Applicants can submit their fingerprints and facial photographs at one of the four Australian Visa Application centres in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria. Travellers will need to resubmit their biometric data each time they apply for an Australian visa.

Application fees have also been affected by the introduction of

the new requirements, with a tourist or business visitor visa base application charge of AU\$135 (R1 480).

Nicholson adds that, since the system was launched, the visa company has not experienced

any delays with the process and that all applications have been successfully completed.

"Everything has been smooth sailing on our side," says **Carla Douglas**, national business manager for visas of MDS Visapak, adding that every time the visa company has submitted an application it has

been able to book an appointment for biometric data collection immediately.

"We do not expect any negative impact on travel to Australia with the new visa requirements," says **Michi Messner**, regional manager for Africa of Qantas Airways.



PHOTO: SHANNON VAN ZYL

## Earn some, spend some

*ClubRed, the rewards programme for travel agents who book with Avis or Budget, has upgraded its website and launched a new ClubRed card. With the card, members will be awarded ClubRed Roses on car-rental*

*bookings. The points can then be converted either into cash on the card or eBucks, which can be spent at any eBucks partner. Pictured here, ready to spend, is Lance Smith, executive sales, Avis Budget South Africa.*






# One Year-End to End Them All



It's no secret that planning a banquet is a stressful endeavour. Birchwood has taken this into consideration and now offers you an all-in-one solution. Our four banquet packages include a single, yet comprehensive cost per person starting at R350 per head.

Indoor or out. Casual or formal. Intimate or epic. It's all available here.

 011 897 0000  [reservations@birchwoodhotel.co.za](mailto:reservations@birchwoodhotel.co.za)  [www.birchwoodhotel.co.za](http://www.birchwoodhotel.co.za)



Relax, *do* business!

# BON Hotels enters Bloem, exits Shelley Point

**T**HE BON Hotels group has launched a new property just days before cutting another.

The group added BON Hotel Bloemfontein Central – previously Protea Hotel Bloemfontein Central – to its South African portfolio. The 115-room hotel is situated in the Bloemfontein CBD and officially launched as BON Hotel Bloemfontein Central on July 1.

Plans and improvements to the hotel included repainting the exterior, revamping the porte cochère and public areas, installing new air-conditioning systems and refurbishing the popular Courtroom restaurant and Judge's bar.

The group will no longer continue with the lease and management of BON Hotel Shelley Point.

BON Hotels was instrumental in the successful business rescue of the three-star hotel



The new 115-room BON Hotel Bloemfontein Central was launched on July 1.

on the Cape west coast in 2014 and subsequently took over marketing and management of its operations.

**Guy Stehlik**, ceo of BON Hotels, said that, regrettably, despite

their best efforts, the industry had seen a decline in conference and corporate business, and this had been difficult to overcome. The 88-room hotel enjoyed strong support from the leisure market,

however, according to Stehlik, "notwithstanding its wonderful aesthetics and resort-like feel, the lack of midweek business has made sustainable targets a challenge".

## Kenya plans mega conference centre

**P**LANS are under way for the Kenyan government to construct a 5 000-seat international convention centre in Mombasa.

Kenyan Tourism Minister, **Najib Balala**, said the government was looking for land in the coastal city to build a modern conference centre in a bid to attract more international meetings.

He said the facility would have spacious conference rooms, offices, modern furniture and equipment to create an enabling environment for international events.

"Unfortunately, Mombasa doesn't have a convention centre, forcing organisers to take meetings elsewhere. That's why government is determined to build the facility this year," said Balala.

## Where is Air China?

**T**HE SA travel trade is frustrated by its inability to reach Air China's sales representative in South Africa.

**Alet Steyn**, gm of Wendy Wu Tours in South Africa (China specialists), says the operator has tried various avenues in South Africa to make contact with Air China but has been unsuccessful. "It seems there is no local representation for the airline in South Africa. We have now consulted with our head office in the UK to assist us in getting in touch with the airline." Wendy Wu currently uses Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines to get clients to China.

Another tour operator who books travel to China and who wanted to remain anonymous, said it received calls from frustrated agents who were unsure how to get in touch with Air China. "Where is Air China's rep in South Africa?" they all ask. This operator said it could see that Air China

was seldom booked by local agents.

Another concern for agents is the poor connection options from cities outside Johannesburg. One agent said that the earliest flights to Johannesburg from Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein, East London or Port Elizabeth, left very little time to connect if passengers were hoping to catch flight CA868, which departs at 08h55. She further pointed out that Air China did not offer STPC, meaning travellers would have to absorb the cost of accommodation if they chose to catch a flight the day before.

While **Keith Gow**, md of Gateway Travel and Tours, agreed that the connecting times to Johannesburg were tight, he said this would not affect the bulk of the route's traffic, which consisted primarily of Chinese travellers who work in Southern Africa returning home. "The bulk of



Alet Steyn, gm, Wendy Wu Tours in SA

these travellers come from Gauteng."

He said the route had been relatively successful since its launch in October but was still only serviced three times a week. An indication of greater success would be if they upped this to four, five or six flights weekly, he said. "The plan is to go daily," said Gow.



# Beware of blasé attitude to local travel threats

**C**ORPORATES' nonchalant attitude toward local safety threats could land them – and their TMCs – in hot water.

Recent events, such as the unrest in Tshwane and the US terror alert issued in South Africa due to terrorist groups allegedly planning to carry out attacks in places where US citizens congregate, have highlighted the issue.

**Vanessa Krook**, BCD Travel's manager of marketing, communications and supplier relations, says consultants at BCD warned their corporate clients about the alerts and the potential threats they posed but did not get much reaction from travellers. "Corporates are generally more concerned with incidents that take place abroad rather than alerts affecting local travel," she says.

GBTA South Africa chairman, **Howard Stephens**, agrees and says the travel manager will

evaluate whether the alert pertains to the destination that the traveller is visiting before issuing a warning themselves. "Overall, though, corporates generally don't do anything specific with regard to alerts pertaining to local travel," he says.

However, both corporates and TMCs are required to alert their travellers about potential threats in writing, as soon as the trip is confirmed and regardless of where the traveller is travelling, says Advocate **Louis Nel**. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of duty of care in the form of negligence, he says.

Making a booking but failing to advise passengers of imminent danger is, thus, a breach of duty of care, says Nel, and there is no difference whether the intended journey is of a local or international nature.

"Given that travel agents should be properly trained and



Advocate Louis Nel

have the skills and knowledge to adequately advise clients, the failure to impart that knowledge could see the court find that they breached a duty of care and will be held liable for the consequences," Nel says. "Section 49 of the Consumer Protection Act requires certain aspects of the transactions to

be brought to the attention of the consumer in writing as soon as the payment is made or activity is embarked on and it must be done in such a way that it will 'attract the attention of an ordinarily alert consumer'," he says.

On the other hand, the law will not hold any person liable for harm done that was not foreseeable, says Nel, even if it was caused by a breach in duty of care. Foreseeability is determined by whether the harm is likely to come to fruition, the chance that the risk would turn into actual harm and the probable seriousness of the incident if it were to occur. "Conversely, if it is proved that the harm was not foreseeable, there is no duty of care," says Nel.

Additionally, courts will not award damages if it did not result in physical injury to the person or property of the traveller, he says.

## DHA stops biometrics for SA travellers

**S**OUTH AFRICAN travellers are no longer required to have their biometrics captured when flying in and out of South African airports.

Minister of Home Affairs, **Malusi Gigaba**, announced that the recent roll-out of the biometric system for all passengers, creating up to three-hour delays for both outbound and inbound travellers, had been updated. "As soon as the system reads a South African passport it now picks up that biometrics are not needed," he said.

Minister Gigaba said that, during the roll-out of the system, it came to the attention of the Department of Home Affairs that there

were not sufficient personnel to process the movement of all passengers with biometrics.

He also said that the processing of South African travellers' biometrics had been an oversight as the information was superfluous because it was already contained in their ID documents.

According to the Minister, the system is now running smoothly and travellers are no longer experiencing delays.

The department is, however, advising travellers to proceed through security gates as soon as they have checked in for their flight, in order to avoid congestion at immigration counters.

## When clients trade TMCs for ITCs

**M**ORE corporates are bringing in dedicated ITCs to handle their travel, rather than using TMCs, experts say.

Some corporates are bringing in travel consultants who previously worked for traditional travel agencies, then setting them up as in-house ITCs contracted to the corporate, Club Travel md, **Wally Gaynor**, said.

A number of corporates are choosing to have a TMC fulfil all international travel then assign an in-house TMC to handle domestic travel through an online booking tool, while others opt for ITCs to fulfil all travel bookings, says Club Travel franchise director, **Jo Fraser**.

This trend is gathering momentum because corporates

find it is a good way to save costs, says GBTA South Africa chairman, **Howard Stephens**. "By hiring in-house, dedicated consultants, the corporate feels the consultant is part of the family and the two parties build that relationship."

The corporate ITC trend is picking up and will continue to do so in the future, says **Garth Wolff**, CEO of eTravel. "The biggest drawback, however, is that ITCs are typically seen by corporates as 'potentially dangerous' due to previous incidents of rogue ITCs, etc. This is why it is important to differentiate between ITCs, which are backed by host companies, and ITAs, independent ticketing agents, who are not backed by anybody," Wolff says. ■

# Taking the time to earn travellers' trust

**Richard Whitfield**, travel buyer for T-Systems, has spent the last five years building relationships and streamlining systems. He spoke to **Sue van Winsen** about some of the important lessons he has learnt along the way.

**P**ressures to realise savings and enforce policy can result in forgetting the human side of corporate travel management. In turn, this can make pushing for compliance and corporate behaviour shifts an endless uphill battle. **Richard Whitfield**, travel buyer for T-Systems, believes this can be overcome by building trust and relationships with everyone throughout the corporate travel channel – from travellers through to your vendors and TMC. This has been the cornerstone of his approach, which has ultimately resulted in significant savings for the company.

## Theology, banking and customer service desks

After completing school, Whitfield started studying a subject very few travel buyers pursue – theology. He explains that initially his plan was to enter into full-time ministry, but a series of life decisions took him down a different path and, after just over a year, he left and started studying via correspondence through the Institute of Bankers (IOB). Initially, he worked in customer relationship management in the banking industry, and eventually moved into key account management. “I think this provided me with a very good base in terms of gaining a customer perspective and learning how to deal with different types of people,” Whitfield says.

From there, he moved into various roles – he worked in the contact centre industry, as well as public relations for a retail brand. This broad foundation helped him gain a sense of the different levels of governance that influence decisions within a corporate environment, while at the same time learning how to handle sensitive customer-related matters with diplomacy, he adds.

His first taste of procurement came while working for an IT company in Cape Town. Again, he worked on the contact centre side of the business, but part of his role

saw him oversee training, and the procurement of various training requirements. “This involved knowing what to buy, where to buy, when to negotiate, as well as determining which type of training would work best locally, and which would work internationally, as we serviced both British, Dutch and South African clientele,” explains Whitfield.

## Into travel procurement

Upon returning to Gauteng, Whitfield started working for T-Systems, an ICT company (Information and Communications Technology). He provided management support to the then CEO. After her departure, Whitfield felt he was ready for a new challenge, and the company's HR department recommended that he apply for the travel buyer position. His application was successful and he's been working in this role since 2011.

“I took on the position of travel buyer during a period in which the company was transitioning in terms of its travel outlook,” says Whitfield. “At that point we had an in-house TMC, everything was done manually, there were no systems in place and essentially people just did whatever they pleased. There was no governance and no compliance,” he says.

T-Systems decided to move from an in-house TMC to an online booking tool that is completely integrated with its internal processes and systems. “Travel bookers can go on to the intranet, create a travel request on the system, which is integrated into Amadeus, but can only make the online booking once it has been approved by the travel authorisers,” he says.

Over the last five years, the results have been dramatic. “Our

travel spend is down 50% just from putting the new systems and travel policy in place and educating people on how to book travel,” he says. Careful thought and planning went on behind the scenes to motivate staff to adopt the online tool. “We decided to start with the PAs, explains Whitfield, as they are the ones who have a great deal of influence over managers and their perceptions.” Despite some initial teething problems, the company eventually started realising an adoption rate of between 75% and 90% for the online booking tool.

## Realising savings

While T-Systems has a travel policy in place that says people need to book at least seven to 14 days in advance to realise lower fares and get savings, as an ICT company, travel is often required at the last

minute, says Whitfield. “For example, servers may go down in Gaborone and the technician has to get there as quickly as possible. Our company travel ranges all the way from planned to critical,” he says.

Despite this, Whitfield says the company realised the bulk of its savings by channelling travel spend to preferred vendors. “The idea is not to have 500 guesthouses on your system. Once you've put the necessary systems in place to channel your spend towards preferred vendors, then the travel buyer is in a position to build relationships with these vendors. By maintaining those relationships, you can manage any complaints that come through from your travellers.”

Simultaneously, the industry has undergone changes, which have seen a lot of meetings taking place within a virtual space. “Corporates are now really examining whether they have to fly and have a face-

to-face meeting. Perhaps they can rather just conference call. This is having a huge impact on the travel industry – and quite rightly so,” he adds.

## An ever-evolving policy

He says travel policy is rigidly enforced within the organisation. “We communicate the policy to everyone within the organisation and, through effective reporting, we've been able to pinpoint those that are not complying.” From there, it's important to educate those travellers on how they can book their travel in a better way. “People are now more cognisant of the fact that ‘Big Brother’ is watching,” he jokes.

He points out that rigid enforcement of the travel policy means that you have to commit to a constant process of reviewing and rewriting the document in order to stay relevant and maintain adherence. “For the first two years of implementing the online booking tool there was such a drive to bring down travel spend, to get online adoption and to get preferred vendors in place, that you tend to almost forget your travellers and what it's like for them to be travelling,” says Whitfield. “You've got to be human as well. Travel policy is very important, but taking that emotive part of business travel into consideration is equally as important.”

At T-Systems, this means revising the travel policy every quarter with procurement, legal, risk and compliance, and the ‘mother company’ – Deutsche Telekom – all present for the process to ensure the policy is aligned with business imperatives.

## The role of the TMC

T-Systems still uses an off-site TMC for its international and regional bookings. “We've negotiated bundled transaction fees, and specific transaction fees for different types of travel so we now have greater control over our service



spend," says Whitfield. Discussing the future role of the TMC, in a broad sense, he says he believes they still have a very important role to play. "While you may have tech-savvy corporates who want to do things themselves using smartphones and apps, there are also still a large proportion of travellers who prefer a more traditional approach," he says.

"Where TMCs can really make a big difference is by staying two steps ahead of their customers. By picking up on the small things, TMCs can add value. They know who your travellers are, they understand the culture of your organisation and your travel booking behaviour. In turn, we know the senior management of the TMC as well as the account managers. Travel buyers have knowledge, but only to a certain extent – the TMC is the expert that should be there to guide you," he explains.

## Tackling MICE

One of Whitfield's future priorities is addressing MICE spend within the organisation. He says that in today's corporate environment, where there is an obligation to be transparent, it's essential that companies avoid getting into murky territory. "Golf days and other MICE events can come across as trying to 'buy' your customers, and industry has a responsibility to remain compliant when it comes to sourcing clients.

He says he leads by example in this regard, never accepting invitations to stay overnight on site inspections of new hotels. "As a travel buyer, I have the responsibility to set the example and this means registering attendance at events with the risk and compliance department," he says.

## Relationships are key

Whitfield believes it's essential for travel buyers to spend time educating themselves on what

their travel spend is going towards, and this involves physically visiting hotels and other vendors to see their offering firsthand. "This means going on plenty of site inspections – for example, actually going and looking at the room your corporate will be staying in, perhaps finding out if they can accommodate disabled travellers where relevant, or spending time in a city to determine what the roads, traffic and drivers are like."

He adds that one of the most important lessons he's learnt in the last five years is the importance of knowing your travellers and spending time with them. "You have to take their complaints and commendations seriously. If you have a traveller who doesn't like staying at a hotel and prefers a guesthouse, then find out why and try and source guesthouses," he says.

Whitfield jokes that travel buyers often take on the 'psychologist' role within an organisation. "When a traveller has a complaint, you need to make sure that you address the issue with emotional intelligence. This means listening to what they are saying, and then going through to your TMC and vendor to give all parties the opportunity to respond and then taking that feedback to the traveller," he says. "Often, it's tempting for travel buyers to just take the traveller's side, but you have to take care of your relationship with the vendor as well."

He says that industry associations like ABTA, GBTA and ACTE provide a great opportunity to get to know vendors and colleagues in the industry better. "You are able to sit around a table with car-rental

providers or a TMC and hear their side, while also being able to let them know what you find challenging from a client perspective. By putting your heads together, you can work towards a conclusion and take the lessons learned back to your organisation."

## Duty of care

He says lessons learned from various industry events have better equipped him to handle travel emergencies. For example, recently one of his travellers landed in Istanbul just after the shootings and bombings at the end of June this year. "He didn't have a visa to get out of the airport and had to wait until the next flight out. As we had systems in place, we were able to get into

immediate contact with his family and, as soon as possible, had him on a flight to Birmingham, followed by a flight to London and then back to South Africa," says Whitfield.

Duty of care is a huge focus area for Whitfield. He says it is absolutely essential that travel buyers take various risks into consideration when it comes to travel bookings, training and devising policy.

"For example, when it comes to car rental, does the vehicle have airbags in it? Is there ABS braking? What does your insurance cover? If the traveller is in a car accident, what happens if they are no longer able to work – will disability pay out? What happens if their luggage is stolen? If they lose their money, how quickly can you get forex to them so the traveller isn't out of pocket? These are all factors that travellers need to be made aware of and are detailed in our travel policy. We've also produced a travel booklet that provides a brief summary of the rules and regulations," he adds. ■



PHOTO: SHANNON VAN ZYL

# Menlyn on track to become Gauteng's next hub

Billions are being spent on developments in the Tshwane suburb of Menlyn Park. **Liesl Venter** looks at what is happening and the expected impact on the conferencing sector at large.

**T**shwane has been waiting for the redevelopment of Menlyn Park with bated breath. "It is very exciting for the city," says **Bronwen Cadle de Ponte**, chairperson of the Tshwane Tourism Association.

"The massive expansion and refurbishment of the Menlyn Park Shopping Centre – now one of the largest in the Southern hemisphere – combined with the investment in surrounding infrastructure and upgrades to, and modernisation of, surrounding neighbourhoods and business premises, has created a refreshing and exciting new economic hub of commerce, retail, business and leisure in the area."

She says all of this has spurred on the development of meeting and hospitality establishments in the area, such as the Protea Hotel Fire & Ice! Menlyn, the Menlyn Boutique Hotel and Alpine Attitude Boutique Hotel, to name a few.

"The mega development of Menlyn Maine to the east of Menlyn Park is just as exciting and is set to become Africa's first 'green city' – designed with an approach that takes the quality of the surrounding environment into consideration," she says. "This precinct will also see another two hotels as well as convention and meeting facilities go up. With all of this development we have seen first-class companies and organisations moving their offices into the city or expanding their existing operations here."

This, says Cadle du Ponte, provides a greater source market for the meetings and events sector in the city. "All of which means that we can expect exponential growth in terms of business events tourism in Tshwane."

**Nicholas Barenblatt**, group marketing manager of Protea Hotels and African Pride Hotels, says with billions of rands being invested in the suburb, it will undoubtedly soon be a commercial hub, although many of the benefits are not as yet being felt.

At a later stage, it is likely Menlyn will become comparable to hubs like Sandton, Fourways and Melrose Arch, and the area's easy access to major highways and proximity to airports will assist, he says.

According to Barenblatt, the Protea Hotel Fire & Ice! conference centre has been trading very successfully with its location in Menlyn Park. "We have seen consistent demand from a robust conference and convention market that exists in the Tshwane area," he says. The precinct in which the hotel is situated, Summit Place Office Park, also still has two phases of development under way. The next stage will include an 11-storey high-rise corporate office building with a conference facility on the top floor, a Jaguar Land Rover dealership and a three-storey office building with rooftop bar. The last phase includes residential apartments.

According to Cadle du Ponte,

the redevelopment of the area brings new and exciting products to the city, increasing supply volume and diversity, which in turn will increase the demand.

"The new developments also stimulate healthy competition that will result in reinvestment and renovation of existing products, which ultimately will raise the bar across the city in terms of the quality and innovativeness of products our destination offers," she says.

With talk of extending existing public transport solutions such as the Gautrain and Rapid Bus Routes to Menlyn, Barenblatt says, coupled with the availability of more accommodation in the area, they will all assist in establishing Menlyn as a new conference and convention destination in the country.

## Challenges do exist

Marketing of the city brand, locally, nationally and internationally, still requires a lot of hard work and innovation, says Cadle du Ponte. "We need to be better at showing the world our diverse and high-quality offerings. We also need more local destination management companies and professional conference organisers to fulfil our existing potential and improve our rankings as a business tourism destination."

Barenblatt agrees, saying, while there are good management resources and structures within the greater



**Nicholas Barenblatt**, group marketing manager, Protea Hotels & African Pride Hotels

City of Tshwane, the city has been left behind a little in terms of development when compared with Cape Town and Johannesburg over the last number of years.

"But, the growth that we have seen in centres such as Sandton, Fourways and Rosebank over the last few years will start migrating across to Pretoria and the starting point will be in the east of the city," he says.

Menlyn Park is proving to be the catalyst for growth and has already started to draw the big guns with a number of satellite offices for big name corporates like Santam, Sanlam, FNB, PWC, Deloitte, KPMG, opening up.

"All of this obviously bodes very well for conference and convention business in the long run," says Barenblatt.



# Exciting new-look venues in and around Tshwane

**Liesl Venter** spoke to **Bronwen Cadle de Ponte**, chairperson of the Tshwane Tourism Association, about some of the exciting venue openings and refurbishings in the Jacaranda City.



## 012Precinct

Possibly one of the most exciting developments in the city has been the opening of 012Precinct – four trendy new multifunctional inner-city venues – says Cadle de Ponte. Cleverly named for the city's dialling code – 012 – the venues have already successfully hosted events from conferences to concerts and corporate functions to markets.

"Driven by passion for the inner city, the vision of 012Precinct is to build and grow a precinct in which people live, work and play," she says. "The venue comprises a number of closely situated buildings that enable diverse,

rich experiences for people or companies that need a venue for their event."

The cornerstone is 012Central, a raw, urban space dotted with art and greenery, with an incredible sense of scale. There is a sizeable outside section too. Here, one finds the African Beer Emporium (ABE), an upmarket restaurant/bar that stocks a large variety of African beers (possibly the largest collection on the continent) and a menu with signature dishes from all over Africa.

012Central Bank Towers, which boasts spectacular views of the city, was designed in the 1950s

by **Norman Eaton**, the prolific South African architect. Corporates looking for a rooftop for their event will struggle to find anything better than this, says Cadle de Ponte.

012Central Jardown is situated in a building that was originally designed for a tobacco distribution business in the style of a hangar. The acoustics in the space are exceptional, thanks to the massive volume and curved roof.

The fourth venue, 012Central Prinschurch, overlooks various historic buildings. This rooftop venue is another ideal option for taking in views of the capital city.

## Leriba Hotel & Spa

This property is currently undergoing a revamp in support of its environmental sustainability programme.

Situated on 13 hectares of indigenous bush on the banks of the Hennops River in Centurion, the hotel has 73 luxury en-suite rooms to complement its 20 fully equipped, air-conditioned conference venues.

The first phase of the revamp has seen the 20 luxury en-suite rooms given state-of-the-art heating and cooling features. Heat pumps and insulation were installed to make heating and cooling facilities 70% more energy efficient and tanks collect water from the roofs to irrigate the herb gardens.

The second stage of the refurb focused on design, of the building and rooms underwent a facelift to create a seamless standard of luxury and elegance.

The final stage of the upgrade is the enhancement of the swimming pool area.

## Still to come

New on the horizon is Time Square at Menlyn Maine, which will offer a five-star Sun International hotel with 100 luxury rooms and 10 suites to cater for diplomats, support the business traveller and encourage overnight stays in Tshwane and accommodate gambling patrons over weekends. The hotel is expected to have a conference centre featuring an indoor entertainment arena seating 8 000 people and catering for international and local entertainment, concerts, sports events, conventions and exhibitions as well as a diverse

range of retail shopping, bars and restaurants. It is scheduled to open in 2017.

Another exciting development that is being anticipated is the new Radisson RED hotel, part of the Loftus Park complex in the city, and expected to open before the one planned for Cape Town. Radisson RED is a new hotel philosophy, where lifestyle, not luxury, is the inspiration. "RED's flexible service concept includes staff who cater for the DIY attitude of guests, and believes that hotels can enhance their world via art, music and fashion," said Cadle de Ponte.



## Faircity Roodevallei Hotel

Accommodating up to 250 delegates in its largest venue and picturesquely situated on the edge of the Roodeplaat Dam, this venue recently underwent a R6m refurbishment. Renowned

for its tranquil setting, it also has a variety of accommodation available for delegates who want to stay over, yet is a mere 20-minute drive from the Gautrain Hatfield station.

# 48 HOURS in Gauteng

A spate of new walking tours in Johannesburg provides PCOs and incentive managers with a range of add-on options.

**Michelle Colman** investigates.

## DAY 1: JOHANNESBURG FROM THE PAVEMENTS

### During the day

If your clients haven't yet checked out the city's inner city attractions from the window of a coach, they can put on a pair of *takkies* and opt for a walking tour which begins at bustling Ghandi Square, where a statue of the great man surveys the scene. From here they will make their way to the Carlton Centre's 50<sup>th</sup> floor, one of Africa's tallest buildings, to view the panoramic cityscape below. The Mai Mai Traditional Healers Market or the impressive mining houses of the Main Street Mall could also be on the itinerary.

If they've done the basics, they can choose a special interest walking tour instead, and there are an increasing number of these. A Newtown graffiti tour is a colourful walk exposing the street art of local and international artists. A culinary tour of the suburb of Yeoville, now the home to a multitude of



*Johannesburg's trendy Maboneng Precinct is a great option for shoppers looking for unique items to purchase.*

African communities, spotlights the cuisines they offer. A CBD tour with an architectural focus takes in historical buildings associated with the city's mining and banking industries. There are walking tours of Ferreirasdorp, Fordsburg, Chinatown and Braamfontein, each with their own cultural focus.

Deservedly, Johannesburg has a reputation as Africa's shopping capital. Your clients can devote a few hours in the afternoon to browsing some of the inner city's shopping Meccas, where East and West collide in unique products. The Oriental Plaza in Fordsburg, Newtown's galleries, Maboneng's Arts on Main and the Small Street

Mall, are just some locations where they can buy that piece of African fabric or hand-crafted jewellery they won't find anywhere else.

### In the evening

In the evening, your clients can head out for one of Braamfontein's slick night spots, such as Randlords, a rooftop bar on the 22nd floor of South Point Towers, or The Orbit Jazz Club & Bistro. They can catch a show – anything from ballet to pantomime – at the Johannesburg Theatre Complex, or something with a distinctly African flavour at the Market Theatre in Newtown. Bassline, one of Johannesburg's most famous jazz clubs, also in Newtown, has now broadened its scope, and also offers a platform to poets and musicians of other genres.



## DAY 2: CENTRAL PRETORIA AND A TOUCH OF THE BUSH

### During the day

Feet once again ensconced in those *takkies*, your clients can take a Gauteng train ride to arrive in Pretoria a half hour or so later. It's relatively easy to undertake a self-guided walking tour of the city centre covering the following landmarks:

- Heroes Acre, the burial place of boer leaders.
- Church Square, with its historic buildings such as the Palace of Justice and Ou Raadsaal.
- Chief Tshwane statue in front of the City Hall.
- Burgers Park, the city's oldest park.
- Strijdom Square, with its historic sculptures.
- The Pretoria Zoo.



*The city's historic buildings can be viewed during a self-guided walking tour.*

- The Union Buildings, seat of government.
- The opening of the Dinokeng Game Reserve just north of Pretoria now makes it possible to experience a game viewing safari roughly 30 minutes from Gauteng's urban jungle. The trip will require

vehicle transport, however, which could be arranged with one of the game lodges operating in the reserve. Once in the reserve, your clients will be able to spot a wide range of animals including some of the Big 5 species. At lodges such as Kwalata and Mongena, game

drives and walks can be undertaken, even a boat cruise on a local dam.

If time allows, a stop en-route can be made in the mining village of Cullinan, for lunch and a quick shop for curios.

### In the evening

Back in Johannesburg, end off the day with a guided Soweto by Night tour. After a dinner of ox liver and onions or steamed chicken and chakalaka in a township restaurant, your clients could find themselves in a jazz club or a shebeen, jiving to a range of home-grown music styles and sampling a local brew.





# It's time for buyers to demand sustainability from suppliers

**Greg McManus** is md of the tourism-based environmental certification programme, Heritage Environmental Management Company. He explains why it is important that corporates start demanding more from their suppliers in terms of sustainability.

**A**n integral part of the now-established sustainability reporting standard relates to issues such as travel, yet corporate travel decisions often fly in the face of corporate sustainability strategies and commitments.

Few – if any, corporate buyers and travel professionals actively seek-out hotels or accommodation that share their corporate sustainability objectives or vision, and this leaves reputational and financial risk in the overall performance of companies.

For example, many of the multi-nationals in South Africa are committed to environmental responsibility, yet they continue to support and select non-certified hotels, resorts and lodges for corporate accommodation, entertainment or product launch purposes. Add to this the impacts of the travel and transport selections that they make, and this detracts quite considerably from their corporate policies and vision in many cases.

Greater awareness of the impacts that buying decisions have on the environment,

communities and the financial and ethical performance of corporate objectives could make serious inroads into the establishment of a more sustainable travel culture in this country. Consumers – and thankfully a growing corporate level, have become highly aware of sustainability issues and the claims that are being made by organisations and companies in all fields, yet the 'soft underbelly' of large and medium-sized companies lies in how they translate their commitments into action. Travel and accommodation are perhaps examples of the risks that companies take, yet it is also the easiest to address.

As a practitioner in the sustainability and certification field for the past 20 years, our single biggest obstacle to getting more hotels and conferencing facilities to adopt more responsible and sustainable practice – and to get recognised for this through certification, is the lack of demand from the corporate market. I believe that by raising awareness of corporate buyers for the need to ask simple questions of their suppliers could go a long-way to addressing this problem, and that



*Greg McManus, md, Heritage Environmental Management Company*

they could help drive sustainable and responsible tourism to the benefit of South and Southern Africa and its communities.

If we consider the amount of travel being done in the corporate market in this region alone, raised awareness and commitment would certainly make a difference to those that have committed to sustainable practice, and it would bring almost immediate benefits to the corporate traveller as well.

## *PCOs, tailor your conferences*

**C**onference organisers need to be mindful of where their conference is being held and tailor their meetings accordingly, says Saaci ceo, **Adriaan Liebetrau**.

Speaking to *Travel Buyer* on the sidelines of the recent Saaci Congress at the President Hotel in Mangaung, Liebetrau said the success of this year's event was largely due to it being tailored to make the most of the host city's unique strengths.

The Saaci Congress included a Venetian Ball, an idea that Liebetrau says came on the back of the realisation that jazz was one of the strengths of Bloemfontein. "We had the orchestra from the University of the Free State perform at the ball as well, which gave it a personalised feel," he said.

He added that conferences needed to be more experiential for the delegate. "Gone are the days of the PowerPoint presentation. We need to give delegates the chance to create their own experiences."

## 5 steps to a sustainable travel programme

**B**ernard Harrop, head of sustainability for Project ICARUS, the sustainability programme from the GBTA Foundation, provides his top tips to help corporates develop a more sustainable travel and meeting industry:

1. Align the travel programme with your company's key corporate sustainability objectives. Seek out environmental experts in your company, you will be

surprised what is available.

2. Collect CO<sub>2</sub> data from key suppliers as well as TMCs, online self-booking tool providers and credit card companies.

3. Define a high-level set of goals and objectives in line with your company's current environment policy. Calculate the potential reduction in total CO<sub>2</sub>. For example, 5% reduction in the first year, rising to 15% by the fifth year. Don't be shy – be

aspirational.

4. Create a programme which identifies ways to minimise business travel and meeting emissions. Options include:

- **Manage:** manage the demand for travel.
- **Reduce:** choose lower carbon options to reduce the number of emissions per trip.
- **Compensate:** invest in carbon offsets to compensate for the emissions produced.

5. Implement the programme. Don't skimp on resources

and be prepared to invest over a sustained period. Integrate and align new travel procedures to ensure business-as-usual. Gain support from 'Travel Champions'.

The success of any programme will come by gaining management endorsement, being patient, delivering clear motivational communications, recognising success and maximising employee engagement. ■

# Budgets may be lean but not necessarily mean

The general tightening of travel budgets is here to stay, but travel buyers and TMCs have ways and means of keeping the sting at bay.

**Michelle Colman** reports.



**Ilze van Aswegen**, travel co-ordinator, University of Pretoria



**Maureen Masuku**, travel manager, IDC



**Maria Martins**, director, Carlson Wagonlit Travel

**C**ORPORATE travel budgets have been under pressure for some time and the squeeze is unlikely to ease in the immediate future. Even if budgets remain the same, management are weighing up travel requests with extreme caution.

**Lara Warden**, who fills the role of infrastructure manager at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Johannesburg, says: "We have not reduced budgets in actual rands and cents, but we consider travel requests carefully and partners only approve really necessary travel." The number of executives per trip may be cut down in favour of some joining in discussions via video conferencing.

The financial problems of universities have been well publicised in recent months, a result of the nationwide 'Fees Must Fall' campaign. A travel buyer for a university confirms that travel and conference budgets at her institution have been greatly reduced. Car hire and local flights are among the first to be sacrificed. To reduce spend with car-rental companies, academics are using Uber services and their own transport.

The buyer says the introduction of an online booking tool for domestic travel has shown cost savings. However, as 60% of this university's academic travel is international, it's difficult to make cuts in this sphere.

**Ilze van Aswegen** is in charge of the travel desk at the University of Pretoria. As budgets in this instance are decentralised, with each academic department managing its own, she is unable to comment on cuts, but says: "We strive to assist our users to make their budgets go further

by shopping for the best deals, be it directly with low-cost carriers or online agents such as TravelStart."

IDC Travel's **Maureen Masuku**, Corporate Travel, Facilities Management Department, suggests better buying as key to managing budgets under stress. IDC Travel services four companies under the IDC umbrella. "We have good negotiated fares with various suppliers as we approach them with bulk buying methodology. Thus far, we have never exceeded but we are under the set budget."

Masuku says full Y economy fares are rarely issued to travelling executives; the company sources cheaper economy fares that offer some flexibility. IDC travellers are disciplined in terms of making changes – the company considers changes to be fruitless expenditure as the cost mounts up and only allows them if really necessary.

Her advice to travel buyers is not to dilute travel spend; focusing on suppliers and good buying enables control of set budgets.

## TMC and supplier perspectives

TMCs note the same travel budget pressures. **Maria Martins**, director: programme management at Carlson Wagonlit Travel, notes that at least 50% of clients have strategies to contain travel costs. Others, however, have increased their budgets. "It is not consistent, even across clients in the same market segment," she observes.

Downgrading the cabin class on flights; more adoption of low-cost carriers; increased use of online booking tools; rate caps on accommodation and stricter pre-trip approval are some of the repercussions of tighter purse strings.

**Shirley Le Roux**, general manager at TraveluXion, says the current trend is that days away are being scrutinised, and trips shortened to offset the weak local currency and general cost of travel abroad.

She finds the impact reduced travel may have on corporate businesses to be most concerning.

"Sometimes costs only hit the general ledger accounts

after the money is spent, which is too late. Automating the spend management of travel and entertainment would go a long way in ensuring that essential business trips were approved, and those that were not essential could be held off.

"I think what is most important here is that customers mostly do not have access to real-time budgetary data when approving travel and entertainment. TraveluXion provides automation to corporations and upfront visibility of committed spend against budget. I have to state that if more customers adopted automated spend management solutions for travel and entertainment, a lot of the knee-jerk reactions we are seeing would give way to a more planned approach," says Le Roux.

Club Travel – Corporate has also observed a trend of streamlining travel programmes with the intention of cutting

**We strive to assist our users to make their budgets go further by shopping for the best deals.**





**Shirley Le Roux**, general manager, TraveluXion



**Mohammed Jogee**, director of sales, Club Travel



**Shaun Lovett**, head of business development, Wings



**Carla da Silva**, regional manager, Air Mauritius

costs but, according to **Mohammed Jogee**, director of sales and marketing, the expectation of high levels of service remains. There is also more focus on travel policy enhancement and adoption, he says.

“Corporates are tending to move on to low-cost carrier programmes, and day trips, cutting out hotel bed nights. This can be taxing on the actual traveller, however. As a TMC, part of our travel management programme is to ensure best logical value to satisfy the corporate client’s travel budgets as well as the traveller.”

**Shaun Lovett**, head of

business development (Oil & Gas Division) at Wings Travel Management, says companies are becoming more aware of the costs of travel and making a concerted effort to upskill employees, together with the TMC, to ensure travellers themselves are more cost conscious and adhere to travel policy.

**Carla da Silva**, regional manager: Africa and Latin America for Air Mauritius, gives the airline’s view. Corporate

clients have been assessing travel budgets and plans based on absolute necessity for a very long time, she says, and

**“Travel budgets incorporate best pricing but also alternative routes and schedules that make sense financially.”**

this is likely to be ongoing because of global issues and prudence in the corporate world. A result is destination combinations, where business travellers will undertake

business to Mauritius, along with India, China or Australia, in the same trip.

“Travel budgets incorporate best pricing but also alternative

routes and schedules that make sense financially. For example: corporate customers are looking at Australia on Air Mauritius as it is only seven hours from Mauritius but also extremely cost effective.”

The combination trip is an option favoured above shorter stays and cabin downgrades, says Da Silva, as company objectives cannot be compromised.

“From a domestic perspective and even regionally, video conferencing is being done. There is definitely better planning at a more strategic level taking place because the economy and other factors also play a role.”

## Don't skimp when it comes to duty of care

**M**OST travel buyers and TMCs agree with **Maria Martins**, director: programme management at Carlson Wagonlit Travel, when she says that, whatever the corporate travel budget, duty of care is paramount and cannot stand any trimming.

**Shaun Lovett**, head of business development (Oil & Gas Division) at Wings Travel

Management agrees. “The most important things that should never be compromised are health and safety. They must always come first.”

According to Martins, the following elements are non-negotiable duty-of-care inclusions:

- Health and safety considerations for each destination – traveller alerts and risk department approval

for high-risk destinations with health risk communications.

- 24-hour emergency support in the event of an incident – traveller tracking by the TMC with all bookings centrally managed.
- Sustainable supplier sourcing meeting companies’ safety, ethical and environmental policies.
- Traveller productivity, by ensuring that all door-to-door

travel services do not impact negatively on desired business outcomes.

- Ease of booking by the traveller/travel booker for all services, so that traveller productivity remains focused on reason for travel.
- Effective visa and passport assistance to ensure the correct documentation is processed timeously for the destinations required.



**AIR MAURITIUS**

**WINTER SALE now on!**

JNB to Mauritius from R5 700\* | JNB / CPT / DUR to Perth from R10 010\*

\* Terms and conditions apply. Fares subject to availability and currency fluctuations

011 601 3900 | jnbmk@airmauritius.com | www.airmauritius.com |

TB2094SD

# MAKING THE BUDGET **STRETCH**

**B**UDGET cuts should be carefully considered as, in the long run, they can increase costs in terms of reduced traveller productivity.

Below we list some suggestions from respondents interviewed for this feature, along with some tips from attendees at a recent ABTA Travel Management Forum

## Booking and pre-trip:

- Ask whether travel is essential or can be replaced with a Skype or Webex call.
- Maximise time on the trip and keep length to the minimum.

- Institute economy-class travel instead of business class.
- Book indirect air routes as opposed to direct.
- Utilise restricted airfares.
- Encourage advance air bookings and reduce last-minute reservations.
- Make more use of low-cost carriers.
- Book lower category accommodation.
- Book accommodation on a room-share basis.
- Negotiate better accommodation rates.
- Substitute hotel accommodation with B&Bs or guesthouses.
- Adopt online booking

tool technologies, thereby reducing TMC fees and offering more control over travel buying.

- Reconsider shuttle transfers to/from airports.
- Downgrade types of rented vehicles.

## During the trip:

- When not entertaining or being entertained, buy meals from a supermarket rather than takeaway brands.
- Use free WiFi wherever possible.
- Travel light to avoid porter tips.
- Advise travellers that room service breakfasts are often

priced individually as opposed to the hotel restaurant's flat buffet rate where guests can end up paying as much as \$75 for cereal and toast.

- Seek alternative low-cost parking options at airports, or pre-book parking as it can be cheaper than paying on the day.
- If travelling with banners, strap multiple banners or have them bubble wrapped at the airport to avoid paying per piece. Keep thick tape with you in case the departure airport does not offer wrapping.
- Stock travel adaptors to avoid travellers having to buy during the trip.

## *Keep spirits up; make executives part of the solution*

**I**N THE case of budget cuts and business travel downgrades, some unhappiness is to be expected. "There will naturally be travellers who were used to the pleasures of flying business class and staying in five-star properties and they will be the grumpy travellers," says Wings Travel Management's **Shaun Lovett**.

However, well-handled communication and honesty on the reasons for containment can obviate unhappiness.

Club Travel – Corporate's **Mohammed Jogee** has a suggestion that makes travel executives part of the solution. "Ask employees for cost-saving tips. After all, they are often the ones who spend the most time on the road and

can see opportunities for cost savings most clearly.

"When one company asked its employees for ways to save on travel costs, they came up with many great ideas, including having their spouses drop them off at the airport to save overnight airport parking fees; buying portable GPS devices for salespeople who travel often to save the upgrade fee

every time they rent a car; packing light to allow baggage carry-ons to avoid checked-bag fees; and sharing hotel rooms when employees of the same sex travel together," he says.

**Lara Warden** of PwC says despondency "has not been a problem experienced as the success of a project is not determined by whether you travel or not".



This year's Budget, Honourable Speaker, is focused on fiscal consolidation. We cannot spend money we do not have. We cannot borrow beyond our ability to repay. Until we can ignite growth and generate more revenue, we have to be tough on ourselves."

– Finance Minister, Pravin Gordhan.

Contact us for more: enquiries @traveluxion.co.za • www.traveluxion.co.za

According to the Budget Speech given on the 24 February 2016, fiscal consolidation is the main objective for this year. The TraveluXion Application is certainly a tool that can provide solutions to the topic at hand, consider perhaps just

**how your expense claims are potentially open to abuse.**

This is just one example of how the TraveluXion Application can contribute.

**TraveluXion**  
clear software for corporate travel • smart people, smart solutions





# IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

Do you wish you could streamline your travel processes, improve reporting, and have full visibility of every aspect of your travel costs while saving bags of money? **With Travelit, you can.**

Travelit is Tourvest Travel Services' online travel management solution that serves all its operating brands, namely American Express Travel Services South Africa, Seekers Travel, Maties Travel, and Indajet.

Tourvest Travel Services developed this internal platform and it is so much more than just a booking solution. Designed for the African corporate marketplace, it manages and seamlessly integrates every aspect of the travel management process to improve oversight and reduce travel spend.

"We can customise and integrate the solution to meet your exact business requirements. We know that we can deliver savings on your total cost of travel," says Morné du Preez, Tourvest Travel Services CEO.

Travelit's holistic solution starts with bookings — online

or traditional — and ends with reporting and around-the-clock support. Requisitions, approvals, travel policy enforcement, adherence to procurement processes, payments, reconciliations, and ERP integration are all managed by marketleading workflow technology.

Using an online travel booking solution makes life easier. High volume domestic and point-to-point international travel bookings become simple; travel documents are received five minutes after booking approval; bookings can be changed online without consultants; everything is on one page; GPS co-ordinates accompany hotel and guesthouse vouchers.

This system is user-friendly and fast. The traveller never has to leave the one screen, regardless of how simple or complex the booking is. Yet, when support is needed, expert consultants are only a click or call away.

## WHAT TRAVELIT OFFERS:

- Air, car, accommodation & transfer bookings
- Savings for corporate clients
- Compliance management
- Finance and admin management
- Vendor management
- Real time business intelligent reporting
- Integration based on your design and security requirements
- Offering clients the highest level of support
- Quick and easy customer setup

**CHANGING THE WAY YOU THINK, CHANGING THE WAY YOU TRAVEL.**



FOR A FULL DEMONSTRATION OF THE SOLUTION CONTACT CLAUDE VANKEIRSBILCK ON 011 790 0102.

[WWW.TRAVELIT.CO.ZA](http://WWW.TRAVELIT.CO.ZA)

# How to

## prioritise cost containment in your travel programme

**Darise Foster** attended a GBTA Fundamentals of Business Travel Management course, where cost containment was a hot topic of discussion. She reports on some of the ways travel buyers can contain costs.

**A** TRAVEL manager is hired by a company, ideally, to encourage compliance, deliver quality and contain costs, according to the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA). Of late, however, cost containment has become the most important of the three.

According to **Howard Stephens**, chairman of GBTA South Africa, cost containment is crucial for travel management because travel is a controllable expense and a travel manager's goal should be to optimise the travel spend of a corporate. He was speaking to participants of the GBTA Fundamentals of Business

Travel Management course at the Premier Hotel Pretoria.

Travel, lodging/accommodation, meals/entertainment and the travel management company (TMC) are three travel costs that typically form part of the travel management programme. Cost savings can be made for each of these aspects, ultimately leading to the entire company saving money, says Stephens.

The first step is ensuring the travel policy becomes more relevant to both the traveller and the company. He suggests that, when travellers submit a travel request, they include a few lines

about the key issues they dealt with on their previous trip, i.e. which aspects of the trip could have been more efficient, which activities were out of policy, etc.

"Corporate rates are a good place to start saving costs, but 'naughty' travellers can still rack up a hefty bill," he says. It is the limitations stipulated in the travel policy, which the traveller must adhere to, that will ultimately ensure cost containment is done to its fullest potential.

### Where do you start?

Placing responsibility on the traveller for overstepping

boundaries outlined in the travel policy is an effective method to ensure compliance, Stephens says.

For instance, the travel policy could state clearly that the cost of breakfast/lunch/dinner should not exceed R200 and, if it does, the traveller will be responsible for paying the difference. Similarly, a corporate could use a lodge card as a payment mechanism as it allows for automated expense reporting, Stephens adds.

"Or travel managers could look at the idea of fining travellers for changing flights, for instance," he suggests. "The money they pay as a fine could be sent to the travel manager on the traveller's return

**CLUBtravel**  
GlobalStar · corporate  
Travel Management

**Let us manage your travel budget, while you close the deal**

With Club Travel Corporate as your TMC, your budget takes you further.

Efficiency, transparency, limited reporting, self-booking tools, no lock-in restricted travel deals and a myriad of other benefits.

☎ 0860 111 357 | [corp@clubtravel.co.za](mailto:corp@clubtravel.co.za)

TB2091SD



and placed into the company travel budget."

Corporates should also consider having employees stay with family or friends when travelling, rather than stay in a hotel. "The company could pay the family member or friend a fee which would, no doubt, be far less than the rate charged at a hotel," he says.

Alternatively, B&Bs are fast becoming a popular choice with corporate travellers, says Stephens. Or, travellers should be booked as close to the meeting destination as possible to cancel out car-hire fees.

Says Stephens: "If, for instance, the traveller argues that they need a hired vehicle, ask them to stipulate the reasons why this is necessary within the travel request. If it is of a leisure nature, the hired car does not add value to the business trip and is therefore out of policy – in which case it should be for the traveller's account."

To warrant a rented car, or to make the most out of a trip, travellers should set up as many meetings as possible over the same period to cut down the

amount of trips being taken, Stephens suggests.

"For example, rather than the traveller going to Cape Town four times a month for four different meetings, travel managers should attempt to arrange for all of those meetings to be done over the course of four days, then have the traveller stay in Cape Town for four days rather than travel to and from Cape Town four times," he says.

## What about compliance?

The best way to ensure compliance is to tell people why you as the travel manager have decided on certain processes, says Stephens. This will help guide employees to travel in the most cost-effective way to meet their objectives.

"Travel managers should be explaining their travel policies the same way they would an ethics policy." Travellers should also understand that travel is not a perk but is rather an action facilitated by employees to drive business. "Thus, while it is important to have rules, travel managers



*Howard Stephens, chairman,  
GBTA South Africa*

should get as much feedback from their travellers as possible because traveller needs are just as important as travel manager rules."

For instance, a woman on a business trip may feel uncomfortable eating alone in the hotel dining room out of fear she may be approached by a stranger. It is up to the travel manager in cases such as this to adapt the

travel policy to respond to that concern.

"So, in this particular case, the travel policy may be amended to say female travellers are free to eat in their rooms if they so please, and this arrangement can be agreed upon between the corporate and the hotel," he says.

Similarly, rather than designating certain suppliers to be used by business travellers while on a trip, travel managers should listen to their travellers if they argue against these suppliers.

Says Stephens: "If they are earning loyalty points on the transaction then I do not think that is reason enough to amend the travel policy, however if they say one car-hire company or airline is better than another because they make the experience easier for the traveller, then the travel manager should listen to why the traveller is of that opinion and respond accordingly."

Ultimately, travellers should see travel managers as a partner rather than someone who is trying to hinder them, Stephens concludes. ■

Turning data into information to understand your travel program's performance can be complex and time-consuming. Carlson Wagonlit Travel helps you put all the facts into context, providing insight and analysis to drive action planning for the greatest results. Our teams of program managers and consultants continually improve how your travellers engage with your travel program, and how your organisation performs against benchmarks. And we keep your data organised through an online travel management information centre that visually illustrates your program's performance in relation to your goals. Let CWT do the hard work for you and give your organisation the opportunity to shine.

**A never-ending commitment to the perfect trip**

Visit [carlsonwagonlit.co.za](http://carlsonwagonlit.co.za) or contact Phumi Mazibuko on [pmazibuko@carlsonwagonlit.co.za](mailto:pmazibuko@carlsonwagonlit.co.za) or +27 11 626 2300.



# Mining slump hits travel budgets

Falling profits and production have plagued the mining industry over the last few years. **Sue van Winsen** speaks to experts to find out what effect this has had on travel budgets and whether there is any opportunity to cut costs.

**D**espite being one of the world's leading producers of gold and platinum, mining production continues to decline in South Africa. In recent years the industry has been marred by regular strikes, retrenchments and the commodity slump. This downturn is not just limited to South Africa though, with mining revenues and volumes declining across the world, resulting in increased pressure to cut back wherever possible.

Travel is an area where many mining companies are looking to cut costs, but **Dale Plage**, business development director for Wings Travel Management, says this can be extremely difficult to achieve, given the unique and, for the most part, unavoidable complexities that come along with corporate travel for the mining industry.

"One of the big challenges is the remoteness of the areas in which mining sites are located," she says. "Africa is growing as a destination with opportunity for new mining projects, but many of these areas have no accommodation, so it's not a case of just being able to book travellers into a B&B." She explains that usually mining companies have to construct temporary or 'pop-up' accommodation for employees, creating a "home environment in the middle of nowhere".

While these facilities are usually fairly basic, at the same



*Euan McNeil, general manager,  
FCM*

time the temporary structures are extremely expensive to construct, so Plage says it is essential that this is taken into consideration when tenders are being handled. Employees can be based in these structures for extended periods of time, so a certain degree of comfort is required.

## Transport challenges

The remoteness of mining sites is not only an issue when it comes to sourcing accommodation, but also impacts the cost of transport within the destination. "When travelling to a remote part of Africa, you are going to need a 4x4 to get around, so the cheaper classes of vehicles

are completely out of the question," says Plage. She points out that these kinds of rentals can incur huge costs, especially as most car-rental companies stock a limited number of these types of vehicles.

"Furthermore, the vehicle then ends up being parked at the site and barely used, or it ends up ferrying people to and from the airport, which usually involves travelling fairly large distances, so then the mileage ends up costing you," she adds.

As with many air routes into Africa, mining destinations tend to be based in parts of the continent with limited access, with airlines often having monopolies on the routes and are therefore in a position to charge exorbitant fares. Plage says this is understandable, as airlines need to make a profit, but it does place mining companies in a difficult position.

On the one hand, the companies need to commit to regular business to negotiate a volume-based discount with carriers. On the other hand, cutting back on the number of trips undertaken by staff is one of the few ways mining companies can reduce

travel costs, which means that they may end up losing their volume-based discount with the airline. Added to this, with the very limited number of airlines operating the routes, mining companies are bound to do business with specific airlines, regardless of whether they are able to negotiate discounted fares or not.

Compounding the accommodation and transportation issues, mining industries are also bound to incur a number of other costs relating to safety, security and health. A solid, detailed and well-communicated travel policy is essential, while comprehensive insurance inclusive of emergency evacuation coverage is just as key, as many mines are in areas where civil unrest is



commonplace, with extremely limited medical care facilities.

## Opportunities to cut costs

Most mining company employees work on the basis of several weeks full-time on site, followed by a week or two off at home, before repeating the cycle. Some companies have attempted to save on travel costs by cutting back on staff home trips, but Plage emphasises that this can be extremely tough on staff, and impact on morale and efficiencies.

When it comes to securing travel savings, she stresses the importance of mining companies working with an experienced travel management company partner like Wings Travel Management – as the opportunities to save are limited and best navigated by a TMC with first-hand knowledge of the complexities of the corporate travel for this industry.

FCM, a member of the Flight Centre Group, has also taken steps to market its services to the local, regional and global mining and minerals sectors, opting to exhibit for the first time at the 2016 Mining Indaba which took place in February in Cape Town.

"Ours is a specialised business travel service," says FCM general manager, Euan McNeil, "that offers bespoke, extremely cost-effective and efficient travel services all business sectors. However, we hold particular expertise in the travel requirements of the minerals

and mining industry. We service the travel requirements of a number of mining houses, including Anglo American.

"This is an industry whose travel requirements are characterised by frequent trips; a significant amount of travel into and around developing markets; short lead times; and a demand for both personalised and online travel services.

"Our clients may be domiciled in South Africa, but their travel requirements are managed seamlessly by a single team around the world, delivering optimal efficiency, cost-saving and travel

solutions that are customised to suit individual businesses, no matter where they are, or where their people travel to," says McNeil. Services offered include flights, visa arrangement, accommodation, ground transit, security and interpretation services where required, forex and expense reporting.

"We work with our clients

to formulate a travel policy that works for their business and that's rolled out, through our offices, in all markets where they do business. We track travellers, offer online booking tools in and across all FCM markets, and deliver consolidated travel reporting via digital platforms that have been honed for maximum accessibility and efficacy. Savings are not limited to time, human resources and energy. Through FCM, the cost of travel is cut too, squeezing the most out of travel budgets to help travel play its part in profitability and business strategy," he concludes. ■

**"Africa is growing as a destination with opportunity for new mining projects, but many of these areas have no accommodation, so it's not a case of just being able to book travellers into a B&B."**

- INDUSTRY LEADER IN HIGH-RISK & EMERGING MARKETS
- REAL-TIME TRAVELLER TRACKING IN EVERY REGION
- SUPERIOR EMERGENCY AFTER HOURS SUPPORT – WINGS<sup>24</sup>
- GLOBAL LOGISTIC SERVICE HUBS & REGIONAL CENTRES OF EXPERTISE SIMPLIFYING COMPLEX TRAVEL WITH LOCALISED KNOWLEDGE

**Solving your toughest safety & security challenges worldwide**

 **WINGS**  
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

[www.wings.travel](http://www.wings.travel)

CORPORATE | O&G | MARINE

TB2092SD

# Top 10 specials

**Linda van der Pol**, *Travelinfo's* editor, is our Deal Detective, bringing you great specials from *Travelinfo*, the online travel information system in daily use by travel agents all over SA. To get connected, e-mail [lindav@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:lindav@nowmedia.co.za).

## 1. Réunion

Air Austral. Fly to St Denis on this open-ended offer, subject to M class from R5 755, including taxes. No seasonal restrictions apply.

## 2. Mauritius

Air Mauritius. Winter sale rates on a return flight to Mauritius are R3 200 from Cape Town or R2 800 from Durban. Offer excludes taxes. Valid until November 30, with a last return date on December 7.

## 3. Mozambique

Mozambique Tours. Spend four nights at Castelo Do Mar in Inhambane from R7 500pp sharing. Rate includes return flights from Johannesburg to Inhambane, return airport transfers, accommodation, three meals, and selected activities. Excludes taxes of approximately R4 100pp. Valid for SADC residents only until December 12.

## 4. Sandton

Courtyard Hotel. Weekend special rates at Courtyard Hotel Sandton are R1 136pp sharing a room per night. Offer includes breakfast and 1% tourism levy. Available for stays on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday until January 31, 2017.



## 5. Johannesburg

Peermont. Winter special rate for Mondior at Emperors Palace is from R875pp sharing per night. Offer includes breakfast. Valid until August 31.

## 6. Holland

Travel Vision. Seven-night barging packages available from R15 125pp sharing. Rate includes return airfares and taxes from Johannesburg to Amsterdam, accommodation on Le Boat (Cirrus B), fully fitted kitchen, linen and towels, boat insurance (CDW), and a tank of fuel. Offer excludes fuel deposit of €250 (R4 110) per week. Itinerary: Vinkeveen-Weesp-Amsterdam-Muiden-Loenen-Maarssen-Utrecht-Vinkeveen. Valid for departures on October 1, 3, 14 and 21.

## 7. Thailand

Travel and Explore. Spend eight nights at the Ibis Phuket Patong Resort from R10 999pp sharing. Rate includes return flights from Johannesburg, all taxes, approximate levies and

surcharges, an Around Phuket Island tour and WiFi. Valid for travel until October 31.

## 8. Malaysia

F1 Grand Prix Tours. See the Malaysian Grand Prix for R13 950pp sharing. Rate includes three or four nights' bed-and-breakfast accommodation at four- or five- star hotels, two-day circuit tours, economy-class return flights from Johannesburg, airport taxes, return airport transfers and a South African on-site tour director. Excludes race ticket of choice which is supplied by F1 Grand Prix Tours. Race takes place on October 2.

## 9. Dubai

Azure Travel. Spend three nights at Citymax Bur Dubai and two nights at Hyatt Regency Creek Heights from R9 995pp sharing. Package includes return

flights on Qatar Airways from Johannesburg, accommodation with breakfast, return airport transfers, visa, half-day city tour, desert safari with BBQ dinner and a dhow dinner cruise. Excludes approximate taxes of R3 790. Offer is valid for travel until September 15 (excluding school and public holidays).

## 10. Mauritius

Beachcomber Tours. Early-bird rates from R14 420pp sharing. Offer includes return economy-class fares on Air Mauritius from Johannesburg, return transfers, five nights' accommodation at the four-star Le Mauricia with breakfast and dinner daily, and land and motorised water sports. 30-day advance purchase applies. Valid for travel until September 29. ■

**DISCLAIMER:** All specials are subject to availability, currency fluctuations and seasonal surcharges.





# GAUTENG The Golden Heart of Hosting

**G**auteng continues to be a powerful and unique conferencing and events destination with its strong calendar of major events, unparalleled infrastructure and facilities as well as the foresight and capacity to attract international interest and a high level of conversion.

The Gauteng Conventions & Events Bureau is a sub-unit of the Gauteng Tourism Authority. The bureau is led by **Nonnie Kubeka** and is tasked with growing the province's business events share. In the most recent (2015) rankings, Johannesburg has seen an improvement on the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA) rankings to 102 worldwide from 136 two years previously. Johannesburg is ranked 2nd in Africa.

More than 50 airlines land at OR Tambo International; there is a professional and safe network of quality conference venues, hotels and guesthouses; world-class golf courses abound; and the province has hosted a number of international conferences, summits and conventions.

The province is served by three major metropolitan councils, namely Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni, and two smaller municipal councils on the borders of the province – West Rand District Municipality and Sedibeng. These five regions boast more than 430 conference facilities, some of them five-star, hosting an average of 13 000 events annually.

Gauteng successfully hosted the world for the opening and closing matches of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. The province previously hosted other World Cup games including finals in both cricket and rugby. Nasrec Stadium has a state-of-the-art international conferencing network, as do several other venues in the province. Gauteng has also hosted several large-scale conferences. Events taking place this year – and in the future – include the Arnold Classic Africa (2016-2018) and the South African Drum Majorette & Cheerleading Championships 2016 during which over 20 000 visitors are expected to come to Ekurhuleni. Over 10 days in 2018, the World Choir event will attract over 28 000 delegates to hotels in Tshwane.

Johannesburg and Tshwane (Pretoria), the province's two major cities, welcome diplomats and business people every day



*Sandton Convention Centre*



*Tshwane Events Centre*

and much of the infrastructure has been developed to host busy visitors. These two principal cities make Gauteng the commercial and industrial heart of South Africa. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange and the Reserve Bank, as well as the Pan-African Parliament are also located in Gauteng.

In cosmopolitan Sandton, Johannesburg's leading business hub and the home of Africa's richest square mile, are many corporate headquarters, the Johannesburg Securities Exchange, the award-

winning Sandton Convention Centre and a wide choice of internationally branded hotels with high-tech meeting and event facilities. Here you'll also find four world-class shopping centres and a wealth of leisure facilities, from bars and restaurants to theatres, art galleries, cinemas and entertainment venues.

Access to the Sandton CBD and adjacent suburbs for meetings in Gauteng is easy with the Gautrain high-speed rail service that transports passengers from

OR Tambo International Airport into the heart of Sandton in just 15 minutes. Feeder bus services are operated from the station to many of Johannesburg's suburbs.

Besides the Sandton Convention Centre, Gauteng has many other excellent meeting venues. In Midrand, between Johannesburg and Pretoria, is the award-winning Gallagher Convention Centre, which can accommodate up to 12 000 visitors in a variety of venues. The CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria can accommodate up to 450 people in its largest venue.

Emperors Palace Convention Centre can host 6 000 delegates, while Gold Reef City Casino, with its theme park depicting turn-of-the-century gold mining, can cater for over 450 delegates. Its location close to the Apartheid Museum and Soweto makes it an ideal venue from which to explore South Africa's political past.

In Johannesburg, you'll also find Montecasino Corporate Events (1 000 delegates), the Indaba Hotel & Conference Centre (over 900 delegates), and the upmarket Summer Place (350 delegates). Other venues worth a mention include the Johannesburg Expo Centre (Nasrec) at Crown Mines, Johannesburg, and the Ticketpro Dome at Northgate, North Riding.

Besides these outstanding venues with world-class infrastructure and facilities, the province offers a variety of unique tourism products and destinations. These include the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site and the Dinokeng area, with the sparkling jewel of Cullinan, the Roodeplaat Dam and surrounds and the Dinokeng Game Reserve, which is the free-roaming Big Five game reserve closest to the golden heart of the bustling city-region. Other tourism sites that may interest visitors include Lilliesleaf Farm, the Constitution Hill, Freedom Park and the Hector Peterson Memorial. The province already dominates African business tourism and is far higher than the country's national average in this sector and constantly strives for the top position in the country and the whole African continent.



*Nasrec Expo Centre*

For more information on what's happening in Gauteng, what to do and where to go, visit [www.gauteng.net](http://www.gauteng.net) download our Gauteng Travel Guide APP on Google Play and App Store, follow us on Facebook [ilovegauteng](https://www.facebook.com/ilovegauteng), on Twitter [@visitgauteng](https://twitter.com/visitgauteng) with #GPLifestyle #GeePeeShotLeft

# BUSINESS IS ABOUT BEING CONNECTED.

Enjoy Delta's nonstop network from Johannesburg to Atlanta with over 200 connections in the U.S., Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean.

For more information, please contact your favourite travel agent or Delta on (011) 408 8200.



TS0023SD



© 2016 Delta Air Lines, Inc.

KEEP CLIMBING  
 **DELTA** 