

DECEMBER 2015 / JANUARY 2016

TRAVEL BUYER

FOR SA CORPORATIONS

+Meet

.....
TERRORISM
Are your
events
safe?
.....

ARE YOU ?
encouraging rogue
traveller behaviour ?

TRAVEL BUYER OF THE YEAR

How FNB's Elsa Silva impressed the judges

Incentives

– why you need to profile participants



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Editor's note

The festive season may be upon us but global sentiment seems far from joyous celebrations.

At the time of going to print, Paris was under siege as police hunted down the perpetrators of the violent terrorist attacks that had stunned the city just days before.

With terrorism experts dubbing these incidents as "the new normal", travellers have been left asking themselves: is there such a thing as a safe destination?

The answer, according to security experts consulted by *Travel Buyer* in this month's edition, is an emphatic "no". According to the Global Terrorism Index, terrorism is on the rise, with an almost fivefold increase in fatalities since 9/11. When it comes to corporate travel, risk assessments are absolutely critical to employee safety.

However, travel experts are also quick to point out that the volatile nature of the global playing field means that duty of care shouldn't end with a pre-trip risk evaluation. Travel managers need to be in regular consultation with security experts who can provide them with vital intelligence as and when it becomes available. We look at these and other tips on how you can keep your delegates safe when they are heading into the unknown.

Rogue traveller behaviour will always be a challenge for travel buyers, but it's becoming increasingly apparent that compliance with the travel policy extends beyond the reach of a

fastidious travel manager, as it is greatly influenced by company culture. A highly topical opinion piece by Wings Travel Management's **Kim Parker** takes a closer look at this issue, inviting travel buyers to question whether the lax attitude of certain travellers within their organisation is a problem that stems from the top.

On a more positive note, the corporate travel industry was in high spirits at this year's Global Business Travel Association conference which was held at the end of October. Delegates were presented with a number of challenging talking points which resulted in some productive conversation. A highlight of the two-day conference was the Travel Buyer of the Year Award which, as announced in last month's *Travel Buyer*, was presented to FNB's **Elsa Silva**. This month, she shares more about the innovative systems and policies in place at FNB that earned her the prestigious award.

Also part of this month's line-up is our groups and incentives feature, which highlights the importance of participant profiling when organising incentives for a diverse group of travellers.

Finally from the team at *Travel Buyer*, happy holidays and warm wishes for a successful New Year!

Until next time,

Debbie Badham
(debbieb@nowmedia.co.za)
Deputy Editor

COVER

FNB's **Elsa Silva** was crowned the GBTA Travel Buyer of the Year at the association's recent conference. We look at some of the initiatives carried out over the past 12 months by Silva and FNB that impressed the judges. Cover photograph by **Shannon Van Zyl**.

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Sanity prevails!

THE recommendations made last month by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to amend tourism-killing immigration requirements are a huge win for South Africa. Numerous concessions were made by the Department of Home Affairs that will be rolled out over coming months. The biggest win is the recommendation that biometric visa applications be made on

arrival in South Africa as well as amendments to the requirement for Unabridged Birth Certificates for travelling minors.

At the time, Cabinet confirmed that SA passport holders would "within three months to a year" be able to travel without a UBC as it is looking at issuing new passports for minors that will contain parents' details, obviating the need for a UBC.

Mmatšatši Ramawela, ceo of the Tourism Business Council of

South Africa, told *Travel Buyer* that the lines of communication with the DHA were now fully open for further engagement and collaboration with the travel industry. She said, over the next three months, the DHA would also extend the validity of the parental consent affidavit from three to six months and would allow school principals to issue letters confirming permission for children to travel on school tours.

Turkish touches down in CPT

TURKISH Airlines launched its first direct flight between Istanbul and Cape Town on October 26.

The flight will operate daily, using an Airbus A332 with 228 seats in economy and 22 in business class.

"Our first direct flight was booked to capacity and bookings for the other flights are following suit. We are confident that our Cape Town-Istanbul route will be a great success," says **Kenan Ince**, gm of the Turkish Airlines Cape Town branch.

"We are optimistic that this direct flight will result in increased business and tourism travel," says **Deidre Davids**, communications manager of Cape Town International Airport. "The increasing demand for flights has seen the airport experience a 7,14% increase in international passenger arrivals in the 2014/2015 fiscal year compared with the previous year."



PHOTO: DORINE REINSTEIN

To celebrate Turkish Airlines' inaugural route to Durban, **Ilker Ayci**, Turkish Airlines' chairman of the board, exchanged gifts with **KwaZulu Natal economic development, tourism and environmental affairs MEC, Michael Mabuyakhulu**, and Durban Deputy Mayor, **Cllr Nomvuzo Shabalala**.

Ethiopian Airlines plans expansion

ETHIOPIAN Airlines is planning further long-haul network expansion in 2016, with new destinations in Asia and North America.

New York is in line to become Ethiopian's fourth destination in North America in June, while the airline is also considering Chicago and Houston, which could be launched in 2017.

In Asia, Ethiopian Airlines is planning to launch services to

Chengdu, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta and Singapore. China is already Ethiopian's largest market by seat capacity and will account for about 8% of its international seats in its northern winter 2015 schedule. When including Hong Kong, greater China will account for almost 10% of Ethiopian's international seat capacity this coming season.

Ethiopian is not planning to add capacity to Beijing as its partner Air

China has launched three weekly flights from Beijing to Addis Abba. Ethiopian will codeshare on the new Air China-operated service.

Guangzhou is currently Ethiopian's largest long-haul route with approximately 5 586 weekly return seats, and the airline is confident the market is large enough to support a second frequency and is seeking additional slots at Guangzhou, which could be added in 2016 along with Chengdu.

Marriott bags Starwood

MARRIOTT International and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide have unanimously approved a definitive merger agreement under which the companies will create the world's largest hotel company.

The transaction combines Starwood's lifestyle brands and international footprint with Marriott's strong presence in the luxury and select-service tiers, as well as the convention and resort segment, creating a more comprehensive portfolio. **Arne Sorenson**, president and ceo of Marriott International, said: "The driving force behind this transaction is growth. This is an opportunity to create value by combining the distribution and strengths of Marriott and Starwood, enhancing our competitiveness in a quickly evolving marketplace. This greater scale should offer a wider choice of brands to consumers, improve economics to owners and franchisees, increase unit growth and enhance long-term value to shareholders. Today is the start of an incredible journey for our two companies. We expect to benefit from the best talent from both companies as we position ourselves for the future. I know we'll do great things together as The World's Favourite Travel Company."

Combined, the companies operate or franchise more than 5 500 hotels with 1,1 million rooms worldwide.

"Our guests and customers will benefit from so many more options across 30 hotel brands," says Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide interim ceo, **Adam Aron**.

Assuming receipt of the necessary approvals, the parties expect the transaction to close in mid-2016.

US simplifies entry for UK passport holders

ALL valid UK passport holders can now register for Global Entry into the US, where they will be able to skip long customs queues and be privy to clearance if they have been pre-approved and are considered low-risk travellers.

US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner, **R. Gil Kerlikowske**, announced the expansion of Global Entry to UK citizens at the World Travel Market in London.

"CBP is excited to expand our partnership with the UK

by offering Global Entry to UK citizens," said the commissioner. "Through this co-operation, CBP's Global Entry and the UK Border Force Registered Traveller programmes will enhance security and better facilitate travel between our two countries."

Currently available at 46 US airports and 13 preclearance locations, Global Entry streamlines the screening process at airports for trusted travellers.

To register for Global Entry, UK citizens need to apply through the UK Home Office website and pay

a £42 (R914) processing fee. If the applicant passes the UK vetting, they will receive a UK access code, which applicants will enter when applying for Global Entry through CBP's Global Online Enrolment System.

The non-refundable application fee for a five-year Global Entry membership is \$100 (R1 430) and applications must be made online. Once the application is approved, a CBP officer will conduct a scheduled interview with the applicant and then make a final eligibility determination.

Cemair launches new route

CEMAIR will launch flights between Bloemfontein and George on December 10.

From Sunday to Friday, flight 5Z0122 will depart Bloemfontein at 09h30 to arrive in George at 10h20.

Return flight 5Z0121 will depart George at 12h00 and arrive in Bloemfontein at 12h50.

Meanwhile the airline has announced its Skyrewards programme for frequent flyers, where passengers with 10 000 Miles will be issued with a card that will allow them to earn Miles for each scheduled Cemair flight they buy.

Miles earned are based on distance travelled as well as fare price, and expire after two years.

Passengers can earn miles only if their membership number has been entered in the booking, and can claim missing miles up to 60 days after their flight.

Further, Skyrewards members will soon be able to qualify for free reward tickets on partner airline, Proflight Zambia, on routes from South Africa and within Zambia.

New leadership for Corporate Traveller

THERE'S a new captain at the helm of Corporate Traveller. Recently appointed gm, **Raylene Pienaar**, is bullish about increasing the company's sales and taking advantage of new opportunities in the SME market.

Pienaar has worked across divisions within the Flight Centre Group for 10 years. Her journey began in retail at Flight Centre Kloof in Durban and over the years has progressed from a consultative position at Corporate Traveller to business development management, and then client account and sales management where she experienced considerable success in focusing on a more strategic way of conducting business.

Feeling the need to re-invent herself, Pienaar then made the decision to start her own franchise business. However, things didn't go as planned and she found herself once more in the Flight Centre stable, this time as gm of Flight Centre Business Travel, giving her the opportunity to handle the corporate travel for smaller businesses and in so doing place greater emphasis on high-touch travel.

Three years on, **Robyn Van Staaden** resigned as gm of Corporate Traveller. "I have always wanted to look after Flight Centre's corporate brands and so I saw my opportunity



Raylene Pienaar, gm, Corporate Traveller

and jumped at it," Pienaar says, adding that she now holds the responsibility of both gm of Corporate Traveller and Flight Centre Business Travel.

Her strategy for growth across the Corporate Traveller brand is three-fold: First to make sure that business continues to stream through the door – "Without sales your business won't succeed she maintains." Second on her agenda is customer retention, which Pienaar says is about offering a value proposition which no-one else does. "Lastly, it's about retention of our people and the longevity of the business," she maintains.

Pienaar believes that Corporate Traveller's biggest differentiator is the level of

ownership and accountability of its account managers who are constantly looking at ways in which to help clients strategise around their business travel requirements.

Aside from the more obvious opportunities in Africa, Pienaar sees considerable opportunity in managing travel for smaller businesses. "Often I hear clients complain that their spend is not important enough to TMCs. At Corporate Traveller we do not operate according to a maximum or minimum spend – all clients are equally important to us," she comments.

Interestingly, Pienaar is adamant that online booking tools are no longer the buzz word in corporate travel. "I still believe in traditional corporate travel management and that personal touch is critical to success."

Corporates are increasingly mixing business with leisure and this is a particular trend which works in Corporate Traveller's favour. "Flight Centre has always been known for its really good deals and nothing stops us from tapping into those leisure market fares," says Pienaar.

She sums up her vision for Corporate Traveller with two goals. "Ultimately I want to build a brand that makes customers stand up and say: 'I want to do business with you', and similarly one that makes employees say: 'I want to represent that brand'."

Uber offers new events tool

Uber has launched UberEVENTS – a self-service solution that allows event planners to organise and pay for transportation for guests. The event organiser is required to create the event on the uber.com/events platform where they will then receive guest passes via email. Guests are then required to enter their code into the Uber app and request a ride to and from the event.

Lufthansa grows profit, hails GDS charge

TWO months after implementing its controversial GDS surcharge, Lufthansa has seen little impact on booking trends, while profits have soared.

The impact of the Distribution Cost Charge (DCC) has been "broadly neutral" in terms of revenues and profits, ceo, **Carsten Spohr**, said in a press conference following the publication of the airline's Q3 results for 2015.

The results show that net profit for the period from July to September jumped by 41,5% to €794m (R12,1bn). The Lufthansa Group is also on course for a

significantly improved full-year result. After the first nine months of 2015, the adjusted EBIT increased by 71,4% year on year to €1,7bn (R25,9bn). "These encouraging results confirm that we are on the right track and that our chosen strategy is having its desired effect," said Spohr.

However, the effect of the DCC on corporate travel buyers has been considerable, research by the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) has found. According to an online global survey in which 434 travel buyers worldwide participated, 42% said they had reduced

bookings with Lufthansa, 93% said they were currently not considering the option to book directly on Lufthansa's site and 39% were seeking alternative carriers. Only 2% of travel buyers surveyed said they would book directly with Lufthansa to avoid the DCC.

"The resulting actions demonstrate the high value that travel buyers place in the existing distribution network. The efforts by Lufthansa to fragment the distribution system by artificially adding cost is not working," said **Michael McCormick**, GBTA executive director and coo.

SAA cuts back Abu Dhabi flights

SAA has cut frequencies on its Johannesburg-Abu Dhabi route only a few months after launching the "game changing" flight.

The airline launched direct daily flights to Abu Dhabi in March as part of the next step in its partnership with Etihad Airways, which flies daily to Johannesburg. This meant passengers then had access to double-daily frequencies on the route.

"Our financial performance on the Abu Dhabi route has been below our expectations, necessitating capacity adjustments in an effort to optimise SAA's profitability, after taking into account that the increased capacity between Southern Africa and the Middle East has not been met with any rising passenger volumes," SAA spokesperson, **Tlali Tlali** told *Travel Buyer*.

SAA has reduced flights between Johannesburg and Abu Dhabi from seven to four flights a week. A double-daily service is still available on the remaining three days of the week as part of the codeshare agreement with Etihad Airways.

Tlali added that SAA would continue to keep an eye on the route's performance in light of the capacity change.

New bird touches down in SA

LUFTHANSA'S stretched Boeing 747-8 touched down in South Africa for the first time on October 25, when flight LH572 from Frankfurt arrived at OR Tambo in Johannesburg.

The jumbo jet will serve the Johannesburg route with non-stop daily flights.

"By introducing the new aircraft to our South African route we are reinforcing the significant role the country plays in our intercontinental network," says **Andre Schulz**, Lufthansa's gm for South Africa. In total, the airline has ordered 19 of the stretched Boeing 747s.

The aircraft features



A first in Africa – Lufthansa's new stretched B747-8 was welcomed with a water cannon salute at OR Tambo International on October 25.

Lufthansa's new premium, business and first-class cabins. Premium economy seats offer up to 50% more room than

economy class. In addition, the new business class offers a fully flat bed, upgraded meal service and 38cm TV monitors.

PHOTO: TONY WILSON

Concur adds access to Booking.com

BOOKING.COM and Concur have announced a partnership in which Booking.com's more than 800 000 accommodation properties worldwide will become available in Concur Travel, enabling Concur customers to access to one of the world's widest selection of accommodations.

Concur, which is a provider of integrated travel and expense

management solutions for online corporate bookings, says the new partnership demonstrates the importance of providing next-generation solutions to capture how business travel is evolving.

"We are focused on providing a fully integrated travel and expense solution that allows our customers to adapt as change happens. In the coming months, we look forward to expanding our relationship with

Booking.com as a TriLink partner to capture booking information while removing the pain points of the manual expense reporting process," says **Tim MacDonald**, executive vp of travel for Concur.

"We are seeing strong growth among business travellers on Booking.com. In fact, nearly one in five of the bookings made on our site and mobile apps are now for business," says Booking.com senior

product owner, **Ripsy Bandourian**. "This partnership helps business customers get the most from their corporate travel budgets."

Concur TriLink partners include AccorHotels, Airbnb, Air Canada, Avis, Booking.com, Enterprise, Etihad Airways, HotelTonight, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), Lufthansa, National Car Rental, Marriott International and Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

Mozambique to build international hubs

MOZAMBIQUE is contemplating reducing the country's number of international airports from eight to three, with only Maputo, Beira and Nacala airports operating as international gateways.

This was confirmed by Mozambican state-run airports and aeronautical infrastructure management firm, Aeroportos de Moçambique (ADM). Commercial director, **Sandra Ganâncio**, told *Travel Buyer* the proposal to reduce the number of international airports was under

consultation with stakeholders of ADM and the Mozambique Civil Aviation Authority (IACM – Instituto de Aviação Civil de Moçambique). Once the consultations are concluded, the proposal will be submitted to government for approval.

The aim was to create strong international hubs in the south, central and northern regions of Mozambique, Ganâncio said. She added that it would contribute to the development of national airlines and air operators, as the international airports would be certified by the International Civil

Aviation Organisation.

The limitation of smaller airports such as Vilanculos and Pemba as international gateways would be disastrous for tourism, said ceo of Airlink, **Rodger Foster**. "Since airports such as Vilanculos and Pemba, among others, have become international gateways, these destinations have become far more accessible and affordable, leading to infrastructure development and tourism growth."

However, there was no need to panic just yet as the process of approval would take some

time, said **Natalie Tenzer-Silva**, director of Dana Tours. She said a source at the Mozambique Ministry of Transport assured her that the reclassification of Mozambique's international airports would take at least five years.

The Mozambican government is in the process of creating a strong international hub so that intercontinental travellers to Mozambique no longer need to fly via OR Tambo International, the source said. Also, security could be better controlled by limiting international access.

Air China arrives!

AIR China celebrated the inaugural flight of its non-stop Beijing-Johannesburg route on October 30, when flight CA867 landed at OR Tambo International Airport.

The new route marks the start of Air China's plans to expand its African operations. The airline launched direct flights between Beijing and Addis Ababa on November 2.

Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in South Africa, **Tian Xuejun**, speaking at the event, said Addis would serve as the airline's north African hub while the Johannesburg route would cover the south.

He told *Travel Buyer*: "This, together with codeshare partners like SAA, will see us create a regional network. Africa is an important market for Air China." SAA and Air China have signed a codeshare

agreement that will allow Air China passengers to travel to and from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban on SAA-operated flights.

"We predict that, overall, international inbound traffic will rise by just 1,8% by the end of March next year. We want that number to improve and we believe Air China will aid that cause," said gm of OR Tambo International Airport, **Bongiwe Pityi**.

"This route is massive for South Africa in terms of the number of Chinese tourists this flight could potentially bring into our country," Tourism Minister, **Derek Hanekom**, told *Travel Buyer* on the sidelines of the event. "We are, of course, trying to get back into the Chinese brochures after we were excluded in the wake of the immigration regulations, and this route is going to help our cause."



*Air China celebrated the success of its inaugural flight with some cake for the whole crew. Pictured here (from left) joining in the celebrations is Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in South Africa, **Tian Xuejun**, Minister of Tourism, **Derek Hanekom**, gm of OR Tambo International Airport, **Bongiwe Pityi** and vp of Air China, **Xu Chanyu**.*

Virgin and kulula sign agreement

KULULA.COM has signed an interline agreement with Virgin Atlantic, making booking and travel easier and more convenient than ever for South African travellers.

Kulula executive manager for sales and distribution, **Brian**

Kitchin, says the interline agreement provides customers travelling on Virgin Atlantic the benefit of planning and booking their trip via Virgin Atlantic and its appointed agents and a single ticket for their journey, combining their Virgin Atlantic and kulula.

com flights with the convenience of one-stop check-in and baggage transfer.

Kulula currently operates over 400 flights a week across 14 domestic routes, operated by Boeing 737-800s.

Liezl Gericke, Virgin Atlantic's

country manager for South Africa adds: "As part of our commitment to the South African market, this partnership with kulula will allow us to open up other convenient connections from multiple destinations across the country to London Heathrow." ■

Meet the Travel Buyer of the Year

The Travel Buyer of the Year award, a joint initiative between GBTA and *Travel Buyer*, was re-introduced at the GBTA's annual conference in October. FNB's **Elsa Silva** elaborates on some of the initiatives she carried out over the past 12 months, which impressed the judges.

Cutting-edge initiatives

The procurement team at FNB has formulated an automated booking request process to move away from email requests for international travel bookings. This booking request form, which is available on the FNB intranet (MyFNB), prompts users to input all information required for a specific trip from air to car, hotel, transfers and any other related or required travel services. Each request is allocated a unique number on submission, eliminating duplication and facilitating the more effective control of volumes and turnaround time of the travel desk. This process is considered to be innovative in the travel space and has resulted in time saving and process efficiencies.

During the past 12 months Silva and her team have also introduced a refund process through which all of FNB's unused tickets can be refunded prior to expiration date, thereby ensuring that not all unused ticket value is lost, which has ultimately resulted in savings for the bank.

In terms of technology, a travel data feed has been implemented through which real-time travel data is shared between FNB and its TMC using a live web feed. Building on this, a travel data model was built in collaboration with the FNB business intelligence (BI) team, which allows comprehensive data analysis for the purpose of strategic decisions and to help manage exceptions.

In the drive to increase efficiency, FNB has put together a preferred supplier programme. Through a tender process it rationalised its accommodation suppliers, reducing them from 294 hotels to just over 60. The savings generated by the preferred supplier list has benefited FNB as has the reassurance which it provides travellers.

In line with this, the company has also partnered with the HRG Rennies Travel Red Stamp Club to assist with the unmanaged B&B and guest house market and in so doing

address its duty of care in this area.

An onsite travel desk is another initiative recently introduced to foster more effective relationships between travel administrators and the travel desk consultants.

Finally, centralising travel for FNB has helped to improve efficiencies significantly. The procurement team centralised FNB's travel policy, turning it into a procurement-led policy, which has resulted in travel savings and greater compliance.

Development and training

Silva concluded the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) Corporate Award Programme (Advanced Practitioner Programme) and achieved her MCIPS designation

(an internationally recognised award which represents the global standard within the profession for a procurement and supply professional).

Increased understanding of the unique nature of travel procurement

Silva regularly attends GBTA workshops which are always a good source of reference for topical matters that are likely at the top of most travel buyers' agendas. These workshops help broaden industry discussions and provide a platform for multiple perspectives to come together. Understanding that as a travel buyer it is not good enough to accept the status quo, it is important for buyers to have access to a platform where they can ask suppliers some difficult questions – push for more innovation and new ways of doing things - which can often spark some interesting discussions.

Effective change management

Required or recommended changes to FNB's travel policy are documented for discussion in the Travel Category Advisory Board (CAB) meetings. CAB attendees are the Exco members within FNB, consisting predominantly of the CFOs of the relevant business streams. Once the proposed changes have been discussed, and a consensus has been reached, the changes are recorded and the policy document updated and distributed.

Efficient booking procedures

All domestic travel at FNB is booked online by the FNB users through the online booking tool. International Travel is requested through the automated booking form process which is passed on to the travel desk for facilitation. This process works well as "FNBers" are quite hands-on and find the convenience of completing bookings independently suitable, especially as this saves them time. With regard to international bookings, the team finds it best to rely on the expertise of the travel specialists, and allow the TMC to handle these requests. ■



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KEEP CLIMBING



Biz travellers want a 'home away from home'

Serviced apartments are growing in popularity with travellers, TMCs and travel procurers as a result of potential comfort and savings advantages. **Michelle Colman** reports.

DEMAND for serviced apartments is growing in various areas around the globe. In Europe, there's been an explosion – the number of apartments has jumped by over 80% in the last two years and it is estimated that there are now over 105 000 apartments in over 1 700 locations. Industry experts predict a further 50% growth in facilities over the next two years.

BridgeStreet Global Hospitality, a family of six brands in the serviced apartment arena well known in the Americas and EMEA, has identified a travel trend among travel professionals that it dubs the "digital nomad" lifestyle. Based on a poll they conducted of 30 000 global professionals, 83% showed a preference for serviced apartments as their working headquarters while on the move, enjoying the benefits of home along with traditional hotel amenities.

The freedom, space and self-catering facilities offered by serviced apartments were favoured over exotic beaches and busy coffee shops. Digital nomads liked the fact that in a serviced apartment they were not bound by hotel rules, could entertain as they wished, eat when they wanted to and could stick to diets or nutrition plans. The serviced apartment is also suited to the increasing blend of business and leisure ('bleisure') that characterises much of today's

business travel.

Growth of the trend in South Africa appears to be more measured, although there has been a significant increase in serviced apartments in Sandton – Johannesburg's second, and still developing, CBD. A company that has recently contributed substantially to the sector is The Capital Hotel Group, which has five properties in Sandton and a sixth one under construction.

The group also opened a property in Cape Town in November; one in Rosebank, Johannesburg, in December and is building yet another at Menlyn in Pretoria. **Gillian Kapotwe**, head of marketing, says future expansion plans include 11 properties in the sub-Saharan market.

Capital apartments offer fully equipped kitchens, dining areas, lounges and, in general, more living space than the average hotel room.

Also well known in Sandton is Legacy Hotels & Resorts, which operates the Da Vinci Suites, Michelangelo Towers and Raphael Penthouse Suites. According to marketing co-ordinator, **Candice Morawitz**, building will soon begin on a fourth Sandton property called Leonardo and located on Maude Street.

All Legacy apartments are fully serviced, link into Sandton's central shopping centres and malls and are within walking distance

of the Gautrain station. A full concierge service is offered as well as complimentary return transfers within a 2km radius of each property.

Over and above these perks, serviced apartments offer rates that compete favourably with traditional hotels, meeting the goals of travel procurers. Kapotwe puts the saving at up to 25% on a hotel room when space and amenities are compared. Morawitz adds that the longer the stay, the more attractive and cost-effective the rate. In addition, she says that ancillary services such as laundry are less expensive.

Increasingly a part of travel policy

Usage of serviced apartments is increasingly becoming a part of travel policy, says **Alastair Dickenson**, client business manager at Wings Travel Management. This is especially the case for employees being moved to different locations within their company. "For example, an employee moving for a year or more to a different location would be entitled to stay in a serviced apartment for one to two months while longer term housing is finalised. Those placed on projects for three months might spend the whole time in a serviced apartment," he says.

The mode of accommodation is also becoming more popular for shorter stays. "We are now seeing more transient passengers, especially those travelling regularly to the same city, using apartments,"

comments **Dickenson**. Moreover, serviced apartments

are able to provide secure environments and fulfil the corporate's duty of care obligations. Dickenson says industry standards are being introduced to ensure safety and security of guests by bodies such as the Association of Serviced Apartment Providers (ASAP), which has a membership spanning nine countries, all adhering to a Code of Conduct.

The serviced apartments sector in the rest of Africa is still rather small, an anomaly when the demand for extended stay facilities is significant, especially considering Africa's distance from its markets on other continents. Very few international brands have delved into Africa's serviced apartment segment, and many existing facilities are owner-operated conversions from residential developments.

Experts say that while an increasingly mobile global workforce will continue to boost the serviced apartment sector, the millennial generation's thirst for travel is boosting demand even further. Dickenson agrees millennials are part of the reason for growth but also puts the popularity of serviced apartments down to a general maturity and development of the sector. TMCs that historically booked hotels only, are now much more involved with serviced apartments. The same is true of the travel buying community.

► Article continues on p10

Usage of serviced apartments is increasingly becoming a part of travel policy.



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► Article continues from p8

Emerging trends

"We are seeing a greater number of requests for more kitchen appliances such as blenders," says Kapotwe, noting that people are eating more healthily and want to take time to actually

prepare healthy meals. "Also travellers and bookers are more price conscious and shop around, therefore bookings through online travel agents are becoming more significant because of the ability to compare prices and ease and speed of booking. Fast and free Internet is now an expectation for business

travellers," she adds.

The practicality of the room layouts and ease of use is definitely important, notes Morawitz. "The booking process must be simple and the service must be perfect on a daily basis – there is no room for error as it is a very competitive market," she maintains.

Interesting facts and figures

- The US remains the largest market for serviced apartments, accounting for almost 60% of the world's extended-stay units.
- Marriott Worldwide was the leading serviced apartment operator by number of units in 2014. Also in the top five were Extended Stay Hotels Group (USA); InterContinental Hotels Group; Oakwood Corporate Housing and Hilton Homewood/Home2Suites.
- Occupancies at serviced apartments are outpacing occupancies in traditional

hotels. From January to August 2014, London's serviced apartments recorded an average occupancy of 83,2% compared with 81,9% for hotels. In Sydney, Australia, apartment occupancy reached 87,5% compared with 83% for hotels. In Dubai, the figures were 78% and 77,4% respectively.

- IHG, Hilton and Accor all offer serviced apartment brands, namely Staybridge Suites, Homewood and Adagio respectively.
- A number of serviced

apartment operators now offer different sub-brands within the sector to cater for different lifestyles.

- A growing trend among developers is to locate serviced apartments in the same buildings as hotels. Costs are then saved as functions such as housekeeping, laundry, security and maintenance are shared.

Source: *Global Serviced Apartments Industry Report 2015/16, The Apartment Service Worldwide*

New to The Capital

THE Capital Hotel Group opened its first Cape Town hotel, The Capital Mirage, in November. Situated in trendy De Waterkant, it has 65 rooms comprising fully serviced luxury and superior studios, as well as one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. There is a choice of three restaurants, a bar with great city views, a spa and hair salon, The Gin and Snooker Library and a swimming pool and gym.

Located in Rosebank, Johannesburg, The Capital on Bath offers 142 standard hotel rooms, luxury executive suites and apartments with one to three bedrooms. A spacious fitness centre overlooks a pool. Complimentary services include high-speed WiFi, laundry, parking and shuttles to the Rosebank Mall and the Gautrain stations. ■

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Does your company culture enable rogue traveller behaviour?

Rogue traveller behaviour throughout a company can end up costing millions. Travel buyers should question why their travellers feel so comfortable straying from company policy. **Kim Parker**, Wings Travel Management head of business development, corporate, in sub-Saharan Africa, shares her thoughts.

It's no secret that in the current global economy, many companies are initiating strict procurement policies to curb spiralling overheads. However, some employees still abuse loopholes in the system, particularly when it comes to business travel.

This irresponsible behaviour is often due to a particular type of company culture that enables rogue travel expenditure and a lack of adherence to corporate travel policies, says **Kim Parker**. Such a culture costs companies millions each year.

"We have definitely seen a correlation between corporate culture and traveller behaviour," says Parker. "For example, we have a client whose ceo will only travel in economy class. He has very low tolerance for any C-level executive or line manager who travels outside of this policy, and consequently there are hardly any rogue travellers who do not conform to policy."

"However, another of our clients is far less strict on policy. If a C-level employee travels to London and books a business class seat it does not really concern the powers that be, because the value that the traveller is going to bring to the business is in the millions. In this company culture, they do not really mind if travel is not strictly in line with company policy. This culture filters down and employees lower in the hierarchy feel that if those C-level travellers can fly business class, then so can they. In the long run, the cost associated with non-adherence, and non-enforcement to

company policies can run into the millions."

Bad booking behaviour

Another aspect of traveller behaviour that can prove costly to companies is when a traveller books a flight with a very short time period prior departure or makes last-minute changes to flight details, says Parker. For instance, a traveller may come out of a meeting early and decide to change their ticket to catch an earlier flight.

What's more, she notes that there is a trend toward travellers disregarding company policy when it comes to airline choices and booking flights on certain carriers to gain frequent flyer benefits, instead of booking with the most cost-effective carriers. Similarly, employees may book a hotel of their preference instead of accommodation that is in line with company policy. They might also choose to drive a luxury rental car or make use of a chauffeur-driven service instead of the most financially viable option.

Once an employee engages in this behaviour without any repercussions from the line manager, others learn that they can also ignore the rules. "This is, unfortunately, something that the travel management company cannot address," says Parker. "It is up to the line manager to take this up with the employee and develop a culture

where rogue behaviour is not tolerated."

"However, a TMC can play an important role in helping companies to curb their expenditure. We highlight the impact that certain behaviours could have on travel spend for the travel manager. Our suppliers also keep us up to date on traveller behaviour and we can relay this information to the company, to help them devise cost-saving initiatives."

She further explains that in these instances, Wings Travel Management will send a goData report to the client

to provide a breakdown of the traveller behaviour and its implications for company expenditure. "We also advise around implementing strategies to improve savings, such as booking flights no less than one week in advance."

The worst consequence of poor traveller behaviour is the financial burden it places on the company, maintains Parker. However, there are also non-financial repercussions. "For instance, when travellers are 'under the influence' on a flight or arrive late at a guesthouse and are abusive to the staff, we often hear about this from our suppliers, and the traveller's company can suffer considerable reputational damage as a result."

Parker explains that in these instances, Wings does get in touch with the client to discuss what could be a sensitive subject.

"Fortunately, we maintain a close relationship with our clients to ensure that we can be frank about poor behaviour from their employees," she comments. ■



Threats to event safety are greater than ever

In a global environment that is far more volatile than ever before, the importance of top-notch event security cannot be underestimated. **Liesl Venter** reports.

THERE is no denying that terrorism has made the world more unstable than ever before. Recent events in Paris have demonstrated just how vulnerable large gatherings truly are. And according to the Global Terrorism Index, terrorism is on the rise, with an almost fivefold increase in fatalities since 9/11.

With attacks increasing, event security is crucial says **Grant Strudwick**, regional security director, Asia Pacific at International SOS and Control Risks, who advises corporate meeting planners to consistently look at ways of mitigating risk for delegates.

"Our call is for corporate meeting planners to take proactive steps to minimise and avoid medical and travel security risks for their delegates. Firstly, it is important to identify a suitable business event destination based on a sound understanding of the health and security risks of the destination. Preparation, including a risk assessment, education and health

check programme for staff, is critical," he adds.

Should you rather cancel the event?

Delegate safety should be first and foremost on any agenda. However, Strudwick says it's not simply about having security in place. "Increased incidents around the world raise another critical dimension

to decisions on whether or not to proceed with an event in an area that is considered high risk. Our advice is designed to inform risk-based decisions within our client organisations and to provide immediate safety advice to travellers and

employees on the ground," he says. "Based on this, event organisers need to assess the potential physical risks to their delegates, assessing the on-going threat, the location and size of their event and the profile of the delegates.

"However, after these assessments, even if security can be

increased for the event, the feelings of the staff working the event and the delegates attending need to be taken into consideration. There is no point in securing an event venue if delegates choose not to attend because they have personal anxieties over the risks."

Information versus intelligence

It all comes down to the pre-emption and mitigation of risk, says Strudwick.

He says it is essential that real-time monitoring and analysis of different regions take place to ensure that planners are making informed decisions on where to host events and then to ensure the necessary safety measures are in place at an event.

"For us, the focus is on prevention," he says. "We offer a range of online resources that cover tips and techniques to keep safe. Our training solutions are designed to prepare travellers for general business travel and assignments or for specific destinations."

It's important to make the differentiation between 'intelligence' and just 'information', says Strudwick. "Timely awareness



Grant Strudwick, regional security director, Asia Pacific

through information is important, however it does not usually provide the decision-support substance required."

He emphasises the importance of planning for safety and security. "Reliable, validated intelligence should be seen as an enabler for business rather than a hand-brake. The ability to maintain business continuity and resilience will be heightened by understanding the risks and putting the appropriate controls in place to maintain operations or effectively transfer those operations before it is too late."

5 top tips

International SOS lists five top action tips for meeting planners to assess risk readiness and prepare for emergency situations on the ground:

1. Identify specific health and security risks at the event location.
2. Ensure event delegates are prepared for the trip – this can be in the form of either pre-travel briefings or notifications that include relevant medical, security and itinerary details.
3. Set up an online platform that contains critical information on the destination country, with ease of access for delegates and/or business travellers.
4. Ensure first aid kits (or stations) or evacuation routes/plans are in place in case of an emergency.
5. It's critical to have a reliable partner who has the necessary medical and security expertise to support you on the ground. ■



What the industry is talking about

The annual Global Business Travel Alliance (GBTA) Southern Africa conference for 2015 was held at the new Protea Hotel Fire & Ice! Menlyn from October 21-22. *Travel Buyer* rounds up some of the most topical points of discussion.

FRAUD was a major talking point on day one of the conference, with delegates highlighting the topic as a significant industry-wide concern. The presentation, which was delivered by **Nomonde Thethe**, senior financial risk manager, Standard Bank Group Global Card, detailed the main types of credit card fraud, including issues around 'card not present', lost and stolen cards and counterfeit fraud (where fraudsters copy the information on the card's max stripe).

Thethe pointed out that travel was a high-risk sector when it came to credit card fraud, noting that terminals that were not EMV-compliant increased the risk of fraud. "When terminals are EMV-compliant the acquiring bank takes on the liability of the loss," she explains. Thethe added that cardless payments such as SnapScan were safer.

She also advised companies to be particularly wary during the onboarding process for new vendors. "A thorough site inspection should be conducted, investigating the supplier's premises, staff members and income statements."

Slow travel growth in Africa

An equally topical discussion was led by **Erik Venter**, ceo of Comair, on travel distribution in Africa. He raised the issue of the slow rate at which travellers could expect the cost of travel in Africa to come down, explaining that, while Africa has a small market volume it is also

highly price sensitive and requires significant regulatory cost and infrastructure investment. "While the growth rate of the African middle class is high, it is coming off of a small base point," he adds, noting that it is for this reason that innovation in the African airline industry has, until this point, largely been about keeping costs down to accommodate inflation.

Focus on risk management

As incidents of civil unrest, crime and terrorism continue to fill news headlines, travel managers have the task of reassuring their concerned travellers, while trying to manage the risk experienced by these travellers as a result of unforeseen circumstances. This was the consensus of a panel of travel buyers on day two.

"Moving from South Africa to the United States, I expected the challenges to be different – but they are exactly the same," said **Felicity Meyer**, Travel at Walmart Stores senior project manager for global processes. "Our biggest challenge is traveller security and knowing where our travellers are at all times because we live in an increasingly dangerous world."

"I think that we as travel managers will need to be more vigilant going into 2016," said SARS travel specialist, **Merrill Isherwood**, citing the October student protests, which escalated to violent demonstrations outside Parliament in Cape Town, as an example of an incident that is seemingly disconnected from business travel but can ultimately affect traveller security. "Our offices are close to Parliament and I had people

calling me in a panic saying that changes needed to be made fast and people needed to leave the building urgently. It was a real eye opener."

Is Uber a risk for corporates?

As the popularity of ride-sharing continues to grow among both leisure and corporate travellers, ground transportation experts worry that corporates have not taken into account the risk that comes with this model.

In the event of a traveller being transferred from one particular destination to another, the risk and potential for damage ultimately lie with the driver. It is for this reason that a particular corporate's reliance on ride-sharing services and on-demand apps like Uber, for instance, is a peculiar choice, said EZ Shuttle's **Guyc van Heerden**.

Raising the criticisms surrounding Uber for its lack of adherence to regulation, **Dorian Toussaint** of Professional Passenger Services, pointed out that a lot of corporates were not familiar with what the regulations were, thus they seemed to be sacrificing compliance for convenience. "Because, how do you know what the risk is if you do not understand the rules?"

Maintaining that there will not be a fundamental shift of customers moving away from car hire services, Van Heerden commented: "We need to remember that corporate appointments are usually made well in advance. It is not an on-demand type of industry." ■



PHOTO: DEBBIE BADHAM

The GBTA Travel Buyer of the year was announced during the conference gala dinner on October 21. The award was introduced to recognise innovation in travel management. Accepting it is FNB's **Elsa Silva** (centre), joined by GBTA's **Marcelle Ross** and Travel Buyer's **Natasha Schmidt**.



From left: **Phumi Mazibuko** (CWT); **Thabani Ndlovu** (Hilton Worldwide); and **Kele Mohatle** (Liberty Group SA).

Abu Dhabi

With its prime geographic location and ongoing list of exciting developments, Abu Dhabi is growing in popularity as a MICE and stopover destination. **Carina Borralho** reports.

A new hub rises in the Gulf

AS PART of its 2030 plan to accelerate urban development to ensure the city's self-sustainability outside oil production, over the last few years Abu Dhabi has invested significantly in infrastructure development, as well as improvements to its tourist attractions in an attempt to gain a sense of global acknowledgement.

The drive to increase arrivals seems to be paying off when it comes to South African travellers. According to TCA Abu Dhabi, the first few months of 2015 showed a 34% increase in guest arrivals, equating to 13 442 travellers from South Africa. These figures represent 46 242 guest nights for an average stay of 3,44 nights.

The capital's rapid growth and development can be attributed to the **Al Nahyan** family, which has been in power since 1793, and accelerated the transformation of Abu Dhabi's desert land into a modern hub suitable for the

business and leisure needs of the Western world.

In an attempt to promote tourism, Abu Dhabi has invested significant amounts of money in the country. An example of such an investment is the development of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, which is not intended to be a replica of the popular French museum but rather to introduce art and culture to the Middle East. Abu Dhabi bought the name 'Louvre', and plans to rotate art with the Louvre in Paris and from other galleries around the world. Abu Dhabi has a growing cultural sector, and so the development of the Louvre will not only appeal to travellers seeking an artistic and cultural experience, but also greatly benefit the locals.

Other developments that will cater for arts and culture lovers include the Abu Dhabi Performing Arts centre, which will house five theatres, an arts centre, music hall and an opera house.

Another world-class development in the pipeline is the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, set to be completed in 2017.

Something for everyone

According to Abu Dhabi Southern Sun director of sales and marketing, **Paul Simmons**, Abu Dhabi is a top choice when it comes to the required facilities to host MICE. "The country is home to some of the world's best hotel brand names, which come fully equipped with everything a business traveller would need, including boardrooms, WiFi and transfer services."

What's more, the geographic location of Abu Dhabi makes it a perfect stop-over destination for travellers visiting Europe, Asia or even America. Because a vast number of activities can be covered in Abu Dhabi within a few days, it is recommended that leisure stopovers for travellers

should range between three and five days. A business stay depends on the nature of the business trip, but agents should recommend that business travellers see at least one of the destination's top attractions if possible, or incorporate them into a planned business event.

Abu Dhabi also caters particularly well for families. The region is sprinkled with fun activities for children of all ages, including Yas Water World, the Abu Dhabi Wildlife Centre, Capital Gardens, Khalifa Park and the Emirates Park Zoo. Many hotels provide child-friendly play areas, as well as carers, so parents can have some time off. "Abu Dhabi has been built not only around business needs but also those of the family. The residents of Abu Dhabi are very family orientated and the city has catered for these needs," says Jean Martins, SA country manager for Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority.

Four top attractions

Abu Dhabi offers a variety of activities for all interests. However, the destination is well known for several attractions which should not be missed.

- Visit the Yas Marina, which is home to the Formula 1 race track
- Make a trip to the famous

Ferrari World for car fanatics

- Tour the Yas Mall and markets for a unique shopping experience
- Charter a catamaran cruise along the coast of the city, which allows travellers to explore Abu Dhabi's city scape and beaches at a leisurely pace.

Advise your travellers...

ARABIC is the official language of the UAE, although English is widely spoken in Abu Dhabi. Despite the general perception that the UAE is strictly Muslim, Abu Dhabi demonstrates a respect for other beliefs and is not opposed to people freely practising their religion, so long as it does not interfere with Islam. As a token of respect, women are often required to cover-up in

certain areas, particularly those of religious importance but are welcome to wear bathing suits on public beaches, for example. The country is virtually crime-free, and public services are readily at hand to aid tourists. As part of federal law, all visitors to the UAE are required to have medical insurance prior to travel.



What's new on the itinerary?

Thompsons Holidays recently launched its brand-new itinerary for Abu Dhabi. TNW's **Carina Borralho** was invited as a guest of Thompsons on the inaugural press trip to experience the new offering first-hand.

ABU Dhabi is home to a myriad of cultural and architectural gems. Its religious culture alone offers a refreshing new perspective to the traditional

western way of life. However, there are a number of must-see attractions for both leisure and business travellers alike, all of which are bookable through Thompsons Holidays.

Further away from the desert, the 74-foot Belevari Cruise – the largest catamaran in Abu Dhabi – is open for cruising every Friday and Saturday, and boasts a trampoline on board that can accommodate up to 70 people. As part of the cruise, travellers can experience two hours of free time on a private island to enjoy

tanning, snorkelling and beach sports. The cruise also includes unlimited water, soft drinks and light snacks and is a great add-on for small groups and meetings, incentives, conferences and events. Some lucky travellers may spot dolphins while cruising along the corniche during the winter season.



PHOTO: CARINA BORRALHO

The Falcon Hospital is the largest in the world and treats around 11 200 falcons a year. Visitors can witness veterinarians repairing broken feathers. The intricate procedure requires the veterinarians to keep a vast collection of different types of feathers, which are then surgically glued on to the falcon, which is anaesthetised during

the procedure. This is done to give the falcon its flight back. Boasting facilities that are better than some hospitals around the world, the Falcon Hospital demonstrates Abu Dhabi's love of the desert, passion for sport, and its respectful relationship with nature. One veterinarian at the hospital says: "The falcons are members of the family, not pets."



PHOTO: ABU DHABI TOURISM & CULTURE AUTHORITY

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is spectacular, made entirely of white marble imported from Macedonia it is truly a must-see for tourists. As a significant symbol of faith, the architectural design of the mosque is built entirely on symmetry and

repetition, with each element having been carefully chosen to contribute to the importance and religious meaning of the mosque. Its white vastness is somewhat balanced by the warmth in colour and detail it offers inside its walls.

Where to stay

A hotel brand well known to South Africans – the Southern Sun – is situated in the heart of Abu Dhabi close to the airport and around 20 minutes' drive from Saadiyat Island. Equipped with WiFi, a range of restaurants and a list of South African chefs who head up the main restaurant's daily buffets, the 353-room hotel is ideal for leisure and business travellers. "Although we are rated a four-star, we boast all the facilities of a five-star hotel at affordable rates," says Southern Sun Abu Dhabi gm, **Pierre Delfau**. He mentions that the locals are rating conscious, which means they are more inclined to stay at hotels rated as five-star. Because of this, the local hotel industry continuously strives for five-star status in an attempt to attract local travellers.

The Park Hyatt Abu Dhabi, which is also suited to both leisure and



The Park Hyatt Abu Dhabi

business travellers, is situated on the beachfront and comprises 306 rooms, suites and villas each with its own balcony. It also features a nature reserve with protected endangered turtles. As part of the hotel's ethos, the Park Hyatt supports the conservation of these sea creatures by having dedicated sections of the beach for their breeding activities. The Park

Hyatt is surrounded by gardens, and borders the Saadiyat Beach Golf Course.

The Emirates Palace, which is reserved for the international and local elite, is a glamorous seven-star hotel, with every amenity imaginable. With 14 diverse restaurants, every guest's culinary taste can be satisfied. The hotel even boasts a gold ATM, where

guests can purchase pieces of gold on the spot. A stay at this luxury hotel starts at around R4 500 per person per night for a standard room during off-peak season. Situated on the Corniche, also known as the beach promenade, Emirates Palace is about a 40-minute drive from the airport, and features one of the largest conferencing rooms in the region, making it the ideal stay for the business traveller with a healthy budget.

Further down the Corniche is the five-star Jumeirah Etihad Towers. A stay at this hotel starts at R2 300 per person per night. The hotel has free WiFi and parking, a private beach, a full-service spa, pool and health club, and is about 1,8km from the Marina Mall and F1 race track. The Etihad Towers offer guests a 360-degree view of the city. ■



Dual citizenship - are your travellers eligible?

Dual citizenship can be a great solution to visa woes. **Darise Foster** investigates the various ways in which business travellers can qualify.

THE Citizenship Act came under the spotlight recently when an ANC official suggested that the dual citizenship policy would be reviewed. While this was later refuted by both the ANC and the Department of Home Affairs, the issue caused a significant amount of distress and saw the topic of dual citizenship at the forefront of a nationwide debate.

Andrew Tyler, vice chairman of residence and citizenship planning firm, Henley and Partners, has dual nationality and holds UK and Canadian passports. His children have South African passports as well as Canadian and British passports as a benefit of his dual nationality. As a result, they have the opportunity to live, work and study in over 30 different countries worldwide.

Tyler believes that anyone who conducts business in the international arena should investigate taking up dual citizenship.

Significant benefits

Citizens from a significant number of countries, including South Africa, are faced with the hassle of strict visa requirements every time they wish to travel abroad. As Tyler points out, the visa process can be tiresome and frustrating, often requiring the completion of complicated and time-consuming forms, passport photos with very specific requirements and interviews at consulates or embassies, which can take hours at a time.

"If you have been invited to an important meeting somewhere in the European Union, for example, you can't simply hop on a plane without the all-important visa," he says. "And if a direct competitor who holds dual citizenship has been invited to the same meeting, it's entirely possible that they will be able to hop on a plane almost immediately."

Holders of European Union passports have instant access to all 28 European Union countries – thus a much wider variety of visa-free travel, notes Tyler, highlighting the benefit of dual citizenship for both business travellers and travel managers.

How to qualify for a second passport

According to the *Global Residence and Citizenship Handbook* – "the quintessential guide for global citizens and their advisers" – written by **Christian H. Kalin**, chairman of Henley & Partners, "the conditions under which the privilege of citizenship by naturalisation is granted vary from country to country, but essential factors are usually family relationships or certain periods of residence, in addition to character, language and other requirements."

For those without the option of citizenship via ancestry or birth, there are residence and immigration options available to skilled people, investors and wealthy individuals, Tyler says. "Countries that offer residence to wealthy individuals and investors include Australia, the Bahamas, Canada, Hong Kong, Monaco, Switzerland and the UK."

In addition, countries offering citizenship-by-investment programmes include Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Cyprus, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis and Malta. These programmes offer the opportunity to legally acquire a new nationality and an alternative or second passport, without major disruption to your life.

"For many residence programmes, there are substantial overseas investments required, as well as a period during which the applicant is required to reside in the country," he says. "However, while citizenship-by-investment programmes also require an



Andrew Tyler, vice chairman, Henley and Partners



Christian H. Kalin, chairman, Henley and Partners

overseas investment, they typically require little to no physical presence in the country of choice and provide maximum flexibility."

Henley & Partners holds a unique position as an adviser to governments, designing, implementing and operating investment-related residence and citizenship programmes, says Tyler. "Malta is the latest addition with a state-of-the-art programme that is the only one of its kind approved by the EU Commission."

The Malta Individual Investor Programme (IIP) was designed by Henley & Partners for the Government of Malta last year. The IIP is the most modern citizenship-by-investment programme in the world. With a Maltese passport, the holder is entitled to live and work anywhere within the EU.

Beware the pitfalls

However, some countries do not allow individuals to hold any other citizenship besides theirs. He explains: "While half the world's countries do allow dual nationality, the other half do not. And of the countries that do allow their citizens to hold a second passport, some have strict guidelines as to the requirements," comments Tyler. For example,

some countries – South Africa included – require formal permission to be obtained before applying for another citizenship and failure to comply can lead to the automatic loss of one's current citizenship, he explains.

"It is, therefore, vitally important to very carefully check the legalities in your home country before taking any steps to acquire dual citizenship," Tyler adds.

Nonetheless, he maintains that the extra time and expense involved in applying for dual citizenship will be worth it in the long-run, emphasising the significant relief corporates will feel at not having to deal with the high cost and time-consuming process of applying for visas. In addition, the possibility of relocation opens the door to a higher quality of life, education, mobility, security and tax, says Tyler. "Most do not plan to relocate immediately but simply like the idea of having options or giving their future children the luxury of choice and options," he says.

However, Tyler admits that while an increasing number of South Africans are taking up dual citizenship for business or lifestyle travel purposes, the first choice for many South Africans is often to remain in their home country. ■

Participant profiling key to success

A trip that incentivises one employee won't necessarily work for another and incentive planners need to be able to design trips that can wow a diverse group of travellers. By **Max Marx** and **Darise Foster**.

GROUP incentives often comprise multigenerational, multicultural travellers, requiring incentive planners to come up with destinations and activities that cater for everyone and offer once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

The first step to planning a successful incentive is participant profiling, which allows the incentive planner to understand the make-up of the group, their likes and dislikes and what kind of experiences would "wow" them. While incentives are normally crafted to cater for the needs of the broader group of travellers, it is still important to ensure that the individual has a memorable experience as well, says Duma Travel ceo, **Themba Mthombeni**. "Certain individual needs can be taken into consideration for example, dietary requirements," he explains.

Huw Tuckett, Uwin Iwin coo, agrees, saying the target audience must be taken into careful consideration to ensure the objectives of the incentive are met. "A good incentive planner will consider the budget, the demographics of the group, where they've been in the past, whether

partners are included, time of year and length of trip. Freedom of choice is very important in incentive travel. The old days of on and off a tour bus all day and everyone up at 7am are long gone," he says.

Balance the offering

The key is to identify the target market and then find a balance between offering incentive experiences that meet a specific interest, while also offering experiences with broader appeal for those travellers who do not share that interest, comments Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority country manager, **Jean Martins**.

When designing an incentive experience, it is always advisable to offer a wide range of activities to cater for all tastes," she says. "For instance, incentive organisers must take into account the average age of the group, the appropriate gender considerations and the special interests shared within the group as this could be matched with an in-destination experience

that shares this niche interest."

The best way to identify the right incentive fit is to ask the right questions, says **Hara Jackson**, group sales manager of Legacy Hotels and Resorts. "Organisers should create a questionnaire to understand each individual's interests and expectations."

Meanwhile **Geoff Saner**, md of Leading Incentives, says that it's not necessarily a matter of matching participants to an incentive but

rather blending the activities in the incentive around the group participants and the likes of the majority," he says.

"Different participants can enjoy various activities and excursions at the

same time, such as shopping, spa treatments, adventure activities or a visit to a hallowed sports ground. Hotels with gyms are a must, and a wide spread of local and international cuisine ensures that everyone's happy."

He adds that rugby, cricket, golf and motor racing trips are generally more popular among male incentive winners, while women enjoy cooking lessons and visiting

perfume factories, artisan craft markets and the like. "But they all come together for hot-air balloon rides, beach or desert parties, or fine dining in exclusive castles, for example."

However Mthombeni maintains that ultimately incentives should be structured to meet the company goals and objectives in such a way that it motivates the incentive winners to achieve even better results in the future which, in turn, benefits the company.

Versatile destinations

Mauritius is one destination that is popular with multicultural, multigenerational groups, says **Enid Maullin**, Beachcomber's groups sales executive. "Our resorts offer multicultural theme evenings with our chefs catering for all culinary needs. Most small and large groups tend to take our all-inclusive option, which includes our famous beach barbecue, which is always a hit."

Incentives can also include a team-building element, says Maullin, which at Beachcomber resorts can be a water sports day, beach games, cooking demonstrations, and treasure hunts.

“The first step to planning a successful incentive is participant profiling.”



Some destinations, says Tuckett, lend themselves more effectively to specific size groups. "For example, Reunion Island and Cuba are better for smaller groups, while Dubai and cruise liners can handle very large groups. Airlift, hotel capacity, visa and health regulations are also major considerations when planning incentives for groups."

Jackson agrees that key incentive destinations offer a range of activities that could be enjoyed across a wide group of participants.

Abu Dhabi caters for both specialised and diverse interest incentive groups according to Martins. "In terms of specialised incentives, innovative programmes can be designed around the HSBC Golfing Championship, the Etihad F1 Grand Prix, Octoberfest, Qasr al Hosn Cultural Festival and Halal travel," she said.

Diverse interest incentive groups will also find much to enjoy in Abu Dhabi, she adds. "Incentive winners can experience the world's fastest rollercoaster at Ferrari World, enjoy the Emirates Palace Hotel or take a peek at the world's first off the

grid megacity – Masdar City," she says. Martins also suggests a cruise around the Gulf at sunset, playing a judge in a camel beauty pageant or learning how to climb a palm tree as extraordinary experiences to include in an incentive to Abu Dhabi.

"What's more, Abu Dhabi is ranked as one of the safest cities in the world and boasts an array of top class hotels, restaurants and banqueting facilities to reward incentive travellers," she adds.

A mix of activities

However, Saner says there is little differentiation when planning an incentive for a small group versus a large one. "The same attention to detail applies, the same activities can apply and the same absolute surprise moments apply.

"When rewarding employees, companies seek a mix of leisure and activities and 'wow' experiences and 'tick box musts' that include the historical and cultural aspects of the destinations they are visiting."

John Ridler, Thompsons Holidays

pr & media manager, says the best activities for group incentives are the ones that require input from a range of people working together rather than ones that focus on individual achievement.

"This way, small groups of mixed backgrounds and ages can compete against each other in a friendly yet competitive atmosphere."

Saner adds that 'local' is often seen as not good enough by incentive planners, even though there are superb experiences in South Africa for groups, which can reduce clients' budgets. "On the other hand, an incentive trip to our neighbouring states can often cost as much as a trip abroad," he says.

To optimise budgets, says Tuckett, incentives should be planned as far ahead as possible and the objectives of the trip and itinerary considered. "There's no point in spending a fortune on the hotel if the itinerary is jam-packed and the group is not scheduled to spend much time there."

Depending on the budget, incentive organisers can get extremely creative when



Themba Mthombeni, ceo,
Duma Travel

organising a trip, says **Hayley Walls**, Thompsons Travel marketing manager. "For instance, one could combine trips to Budapest and Prague, or visit the Blue Lagoon in Iceland." Walls also suggests combining trips to Laos and Myanmar for spiritual and wellness groups or a world cup event for sporting groups.






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Cruises cater for all types

ANOTHER option that works well for diverse groups of travellers is cruising. **Dalene Oroni**, Cruises International's groups and incentives manager, says cruises are ideal for multigenerational, multicultural incentive groups as they cater for all walks of life when it comes to entertainment and activities, no matter one's cultural background.

"Non-alcoholic drink packages are offered to Muslim guests and, although the ships we represent don't specifically cater for halaal, there are more than enough vegetarian and fish options to choose from. Jewish guests can pre-order pre-packed kosher meals for their time on the ship. Muslim guests can also pre-arrange the use of one of the ship's conference rooms for prayers."

What's more, in today's economic environment, corporates are seeking shorter, all-inclusive cruises that are not too far from home, says Oroni.

"Group sizes have decreased and budgets have stayed more or less the same," she says.

Cruise products in demand by South African incentive travellers, says Oroni, are the large, contemporary cruise liners that offer the 'wow' factor at a relatively good price, like Royal Caribbean.

"Royal Caribbean offers shorter cruises that work well with incentive programmes," she says, adding that visa requirements play a big role in determining which cruise a company will opt for.

"Cruises that require no visa, or just one, are perfect, while those requiring more become deal breakers, no matter the rate."

Planning a cruise incentive is easy, according to Oroni. "All incentive organisers need to do is choose the cruise itinerary, add the flights and we'll do the rest." She adds that on-board conference facilities, entertainment, meals and accommodation are all included in the cruise fare. "Corporates can also book out a restaurant onboard to host exclusive company events."

At Cruises International, a group booking comprises a minimum of eight cabins.

Top tips for success

AWELL-RUN incentive trip, says **Huw Tuckett**, should contain extremely high levels of service and personalisation, and unforgettable experiences for the participants. "Corporates should get assistance when organising an incentive as it's a very specialised field and, if not done correctly, can have negative consequences."

Geoff Saner agrees: "It's best for organisers to call in an incentive company. TMCs can still do their clients' airline and accommodation bookings but we'll help them give their customers the time of their lives."

An experienced organiser will take the profile of the group into consideration, maintains Duma Travel ceo, **Themba Mthombeni**. This would include age, experience, whether it's their first time travelling and whether they are travelling as couples or singles. "The traveller's level of experience is the overriding factor that guides an incentive organiser in the choice of a destination and the type of activities suitable for a particular group of travellers," he says.

Nikki van Veelen, Destination Africa Tours' (DAT) manager, agrees that organisers must know their clients' abilities, expectations, preferences and ages before booking activities such as a DAT adventure. "Not everyone is interested in summiting Kilimanjaro or tracking mountain gorillas and, while our wildlife safaris are more flexible and less physically demanding, not everyone enjoys lengthy game drives."

Incentive planners should also consider



Porsche Dumagude, sales & marketing manager, Emerald Collection

the time of year during which the incentive is taking place and keep special rates front of mind. For example, Beachcomber offers excellent rates and value-adds for groups travelling during low season (May through September) such as the free beach barbecue, and Emerald Collection offers special rates for particularly large groups. "If the entire hotel is booked out for an incentive group, special rates apply. Our all-inclusive option is also great value for money," says **Porsche Dumagude**, Emerald Collection sales and marketing manager. ■

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The threat of Ebola may have lessened but with the price of crude oil at its lowest in years, West Africa's oil and gas sector is not attracting the number of business executives it once did. **Michelle Colman** reports.

Visitor numbers plunge along with the oil price

WEST Africa's major business sector, oil and gas, remains in a slump that started with the oil price drop that began in mid-2014, when supply outstripped demand.

The region's other woes have tapered off – Ebola is on the wane and the focus on terrorism ebbs and flows. But the crude oil price, despite relatively small fluctuations at the gas pump, was down US\$80 a barrel between June 2014 and June 2015.

For various reasons, industry experts feel this situation is unlikely to change any time soon. Lower prices keep the fracking industry at bay, allow dominant oil-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia to keep competitors out and

refineries to up their profits. The end of sanctions against Iran will see this country contribute all the more to the oil over-supply, while Russia has also increased its production.

West Africa's oil and gas fields, onshore and offshore, are located in Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Gambia. But much of the oil industry's activity there lies in expensive exploration as opposed to production where profits are assured, and the sector has taken a knock, with energy companies posting losses. In addition, investment around the world is moving towards renewable sources of energy.

Frank Palapies, coo for Africa

& Middle East at Wings Travel Management, who spends considerable time in the region, attests to this. "Margins have become too small to justify drilling for oil that may not even be viable to produce. Companies like Chevron and Shell have closed down their rigs or moved them elsewhere. Some have kept small operations going, simply because the expense of starting up again is so high."

Palapies says, on average, the oil and gas business between South Africa and West Africa has declined by 40%-60% and as much as 80% in some instances. However, an increase in the crude oil price would cancel out West Africa's losses in a short time.



Frank Palapies, coo, Africa & Middle East at Wings Travel Management

Has confidence in safety been restored?

JOHANNESBURG-based **Nikki Fonzari** manages travel services for Cummins Africa, part of a global corporation of business units that design, manufacture, distribute and service diesel and natural gas engines and related technologies.

Lagos and Accra are the West African cities that feature most on the itineraries of local Cummins staff. They also visit Senegal, Gabon, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire in West Africa, and are travelling a lot more to East Africa of late.

Fonzari says the Ebola crisis did bring corporate travel to certain West African countries to a temporary halt, in particular Guinea and Nigeria. As the World Health Organisation has now given an 'all clear' for those countries, Cummins personnel

are once again travelling there.

The lack of credit card acceptance in West Africa is a massive problem for Cummins, says Fonzari. "Our employees have CitiBank and EcoBank corporate cards and are still experiencing card usage concerns with some merchants throughout Africa. Often cards cannot be used outside of hotels and our travellers then have to withdraw cash. Returning leftover foreign exchange becomes a concern in the monitoring and tracking of their business expense claims and of course the volatile currency fluctuation often works out at a loss to Cummins. We do encourage our employees to use excess cash towards their hotel bill before leaving the country but this is not always possible."

She points out that the availability of cash for withdrawal in smaller African cities such as Port Gentil in Gabon or Port Harcourt in Nigeria, can also be problematic.

"We always encourage our employees to book 14 days prior to travel to ensure best pricing," she says. "We train our employees to ensure they have sufficient limit on their credit cards before travelling and that all bookings are always made through our TMC to ensure safe and secure tracking of our employees at all times."

According to a senior travel sourcing specialist from a prominent financial institution, concern about West Africa during the recent Ebola crisis was rife but this has since simmered down. Security

is always an anxiety but is monitored for the safety of travellers.

Due to the awarding of a banking licence and a new operation in Ghana, travel to West Africa by the personnel of this financial institution has increased. The institution is also involved in banking in Nigeria.

"The biggest challenge we face is payment of accommodation as our travellers do not all have 'card in pocket'," she comments. "Arranging foreign exchange is an option but a tedious process, given the number of travellers and the volumes of bookings."

Asked for a tip she would pass on to other travel arrangers, the specialist recommended the Mövenpick in Accra for accommodation. "The service is of a high standard," she said.

What do travellers need to know?

TRAVEL in West Africa, where medical facilities are restricted and conflict is not uncommon, places enormous pressure on travel buyers and TMCs when it comes to duty of care.

Political instability often accompanies elections and travel at this time should be avoided. Acts of terror, however, do not come with the luxury of forewarning. In addition, crime makes parts of the region dangerous, and Palapies says there are locations where business travellers should be accompanied by bodyguards.

Travel logistics also present safety issues – sometimes there is no alternative but to compromise on air or road safety. In addition, there are health issues – travellers are advised to be cautious with what they eat and drink, take precautions against malaria and carry travel insurance.

Monitoring of staff on the move in West Africa is thus of enormous importance, keeping track of where they are 24/7, preferably online, and supplying them with the means to communicate their locations at all times.

Other issues to be aware of in West Africa:

- Daily costs do not come cheap. **Frank Palapies** says a three-star hotel in Lagos can cost as much

as US\$300 (R4 112) per night. A meal and drink in a restaurant can top US\$200 (R2 740). Clients often require detailed and specific financial reporting from their TMCs to identify where savings can be realised.

- In most countries, there is limited use of credit cards. While they may be accepted in hotels, local shops and restaurants will not offer the facility.
- Language is a barrier in West African countries. One will do better with French than English.
- Traffic is legendary, with little order on the roads and gridlock to try the most patient of travellers.

Visa requirements vary

Travel arrangers are advised to thoroughly research visa application requirements in West Africa.

These vary from country to country, and may require letters of invitation from host companies and in-person visits – at least on first application.

If the traveller expects to undertake multiple trips to the destination, apply for multiple-entry visas, if these are permitted, as opposed to single entry.

Yellow fever and sometimes cholera vaccinations are requirements to enter most of the countries in the region.

SAA expands into West Africa

IN January 2016 SAA is to add a second Nigerian point, the capital of Abuja, to its West African network as it strengthens its position in the region. Return flights will be operated three times a week.

The airline currently flies to Lagos in Nigeria; Cotonou in Benin; Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire; Dakar in Senegal; Libreville in Gabon; and Accra in Ghana. Since August and in conjunction with Ghanaian carrier, Africa World Airlines, it also routes some of its flights from Johannesburg to the US capital of Washington DC via Accra.

A recent statement from the carrier said the Accra-Washington

route had seen steady passenger growth in line with expectations.

Comments Cummins' **Nicole Fonzari**: "One of our top routes is Johannesburg-Accra. The new schedule change to accommodate the US flight connections affected our employees a little negatively. One of the flights back to Johannesburg used to leave on Friday evenings but now that flight operates on a Saturday evening. This leaves our employees wanting to spend Monday-Friday in Accra in the position of having to return a day early on Thursday evening, or a day late on Saturday, cutting into their weekends. ■

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1. Sandton

Protea Hotel Balalaika. Weekend summer special rates are from R475pp sharing in a standard room. Offer includes 25% off breakfast, uncapped WiFi, complimentary Gautrain and Sandton shuttle, access to the in-house gym and a Cocoon Spa Voucher – 20% off treatments. Single supplement available from R950. Minimum two-night stay applies. Special is valid for travel until March 31.

2. Italy

Club Med. Seven nights skiing on the Italian slopes from R25 400pp sharing this Christmas. Rate includes return flights from Johannesburg, taxes, return transfers and accommodation with all meals including beer, soft drinks, open bar and snacking, as well as a six-day ski pass, five days of ski lessons, unique Club Med entertainment and comprehensive insurance cover. Kids' facilities are available. Rates are available for flights from Durban and Cape Town. Valid for travel until April 30.

3. Zanzibar

Checkout Tours. Seven-night packages are available from

R13 095pp sharing. Offer includes return flights from Johannesburg on Mango Airlines with taxes, return airport-hotel transfers, accommodation at the three-star Ngalawa Beach Village with breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, a Safari Blue tour, a Stone Town tour, a Spice tour and a half-hour massage. Special is valid for travel between January 16 and March 30.

4. Bali

Perfect Destinations. Seven-night packages at the three-star Asana Kuta Hotel are on offer from R11 650pp sharing. Rate includes return flights from Johannesburg, approximate airport taxes, accommodation with breakfast daily and three tours. Valid for travel between January 20 and June 20.

5. Dubai

Azure Travel. Spend four nights at The Landmark Al Rigga Hotel during the Dubai Shopping Festival from R12 860pp sharing. Deal includes return flights on Emirates from Johannesburg, private airport transfers, accommodation with breakfast daily, UAE entry visa and a half-day Dubai shopping tour. Excludes taxes of approximately R4 195pp. Offer is valid for travel from January 16-30.

6. Namibia

Dreams. Pay for two, stay for three from R3 925pp sharing. Rate includes return flights from Johannesburg, accommodation in a double room at the Avani Windhoek with one complimentary dinner, free WiFi, full body massage, free gym voucher, complimentary glass of wine/beer, two-hour city and township tour, Dreams travel bag, four days' travel insurance (including hazardous pursuits). Offer does not include approximate taxes, surcharges and levies of R2 600 per adult. Valid for travel until March 31.

7. South Africa

City Lodge Hotels. Stay in a double room at a City Lodge Hotel from R955 per night. Rate includes breakfast, VAT and 1% tourism levy. Offer is valid at any City Lodge Hotel in South Africa excluding: City Lodge Hotel at OR Tambo, City Lodge Umhlanga Ridge and City Lodge V&A Waterfront. Special is valid for weekend stays only until January 31.

8. London

British T.I.P.S. London sightseeing package from R2 410pp sharing. Rate includes original sightseeing open-top bus tour, 45-minute Thames cruise or Hop on, Hop off cruise, walking tours of London, Madame Tussaud's with Chamber of Horrors and Star Wars Exhibition ticket, Tower of London ticket and flight on the London Eye. Valid for travel until February 28.

9. China

Wendy Wu Tours. Nine-night package from R28 775pp

sharing. Rate includes flights from Johannesburg, transfers, domestic flights within China, accommodation in Shanghai, Xian and Beijing on a fully inclusive basis, touring and entrance fees. English-speaking guides and visa for China. Rate excludes taxes of approximately R2 000 per adult. Special is valid for travel until March 31.

10. Hong Kong

Pure Sport. Four-night Hong Kong Rugby Sevens package from R29 990pp sharing. Rate includes a return economy-class flight from Johannesburg to Hong Kong on Cathay Pacific, airport taxes, return airport-hotel transfers, accommodation at the Metropark Hotel Causeway Bay in a twin or double room with breakfast daily and guaranteed match ticket. Rate excludes meals not mentioned above. Travel dates are from April 6 to 11.

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