

JULY 2014

# TRAVEL BUYER

FOR SA CORPORATES

## +Meet

# Unitrans builds *effective travel supply chain*

**Natasha Henry gets approvers more involved**

- *How to measure conference ROI*
- *People survey: state of the travel nation*
- *Protecting personal information: what you need to know*
- *Airline consolidation hurts preferred agreements*



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## COMMENT:

## Finding the right win

CAME across an article the other day claiming that –according to sports psychologists – too much talent can hurt a sports team. We need only look to the 2014 FIFA World Cup currently in full swing to find case studies.

According to this article, “the prevalence of high talent on a given sports team in games such as basketball and soccer may reach a tipping point after which individual talent becomes counterproductive to the collective goal: winning”.

The study quoted suggests that most people believe the relationship between talent and team performance is linear; the more their team is packed with talent, the better they will do. But this is not always the case, since it is documented that for teams requiring high levels of interdependence, talent facilitates team performance but only up to a point. The report stipulates that “when interdependence between team members is high, organisations could either hire a better mix of top talent and non-top talent and/or invest more in training to formalise roles, ranks and responsibilities.”

Reading through our People Survey this month (page 3), it is

highlighted yet again just how important it is to corporates that their travel consultants have the necessary skills and ‘fitness level’ to play the game. Yet when you look at the statistic that travel agents are simply not travelling (i.e. not ‘getting fit’) and that the salary structure in the industry is so shameful, and you consider the high level of interdependence required within and between our different sectors – teams if you like – how do you get that balance of ‘top’ talent and ‘non-top’ talent right?

Perhaps one idea is to look further into ‘gamification’, a buzz phrase currently doing the rounds. Gamification relies on game thinking and mechanics in non-game contexts to motivate users, whether it’s to enhance engagement at a conference, or to encourage traveller compliance, among a range of applications.

It’s about finding the right win for all players involved and at the end of the day, isn’t that what we want?

*“It’s never just a game when you’re winning.” - George Carlin*

All the best!  
**KIM COCHRANE**  
(kimcochrane@telkomsa.net)

## COVER

**Natasha Henry**, travel manager at Unitrans in Cape Town, updates *Travel Buyer* on her travel management priorities. Cover photograph by **Shannon Van Zyl**.

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# Fly VFA to JNB for **R699**, incl. taxes

**C**LAIMING to be Africa's first "true" low-cost carrier, flyafrica.com – which guarantees low fares and "no fuel surcharges ever" – has opened flights for sale.

The airline's website is now live, selling tickets between Zimbabwe and Johannesburg from as little as R99. Fares are quoted on a one-way basis and exclude airport and government taxes of R570. "Flyafrica.com will never apply fuel surcharges," says ceo **Adrian Hamilton-Manns**.

The low-fare airline, which is based on Asian LCC models such as Tiger Airways and AirAsia, will operate scheduled regional flights in Africa from various hubs. "This is not a South African airline. We will be launching from multiple bases in Africa, first from Vic Falls Zimbabwe, and rolling out to other destinations."

Hamilton-Manns, who has many years' experience working with LCCs, believes the time is now right in Africa to launch a

"true low-fare airline".

He says: "Flyafrica.com is set to revolutionise the travel industry in Africa, with fares more than 60% less than our competitors and a unique business model that enables passengers to tailor-make their travel requirements. We believe each passenger should only pay for what they want. That's why we have separated our fares and products for maximum transparency and flexibility. Economy fares

do not include customised travel products (CTPs), which customers can elect to pay for. These include baggage (up to 30kg), a second carry-on bag, priority baggage, seat selection and access to airport lounges. Business class includes some CTPs, such as lounge access, priority baggage and Q-Jump."

The airline will initially launch with a fleet of five B737s, offering 12 business-class seats and 102 seats in economy.

## Kenya introduces visas for SA pax

**I**N a move that has surprised the entire South African tourism industry, the Kenyan High Commission recently announced that, from September 1, all South African travellers will need a visa to visit Kenya.

When asked what the reasons were for implementation of the visa, deputy High Commissioner, **Helen Gichuhi**, said: "Countries make decisions based on their interests. Diplomacy is also based on the principle of reciprocity."

Visa applicants travelling to or transiting through Kenya will be required to pay

a visa fee of US\$70 (R750). The processing period is five working days and visas will no longer be issued on arrival in Kenya.

Travellers applying for a visa will also have to follow stringent requirements, including appearing in person at the embassy in Pretoria for biometrics. "Kenya is yet to open a consulate in Cape Town, Durban or Johannesburg. As such any application for visa will have to lodged at the Kenya Mission in Pretoria, 302 Brook Street, Menlo Park," said Gichuhi.

## Booking transfers is now EZ

**B**OOKING transfers online has become significantly easier for corporates and TMCs across SA, with the launch of EZ Shuttle API, a real-time online booking service.

EZ Shuttle launched the EZ Shuttle API via automated booking platform, Travellinck, on June 2. Travellinck has partnered with EZ Shuttle in the development. EZ Shuttle is currently in the process of integrating the service onto Amadeus Selling Platform (SEL).

The new API will enable corporates and travel agents alike to make real-time transfer bookings in a matter of seconds with any of the EZ Shuttle branches across the country. They will also be able to edit and amend reservations in real time, as well as make cancellations free of charge

up to 24 hours before their reservation begins. Through the new platform, users will have the benefit of a much more streamlined booking process, with access to all the necessary booking information and the ability to know all the costs involved upfront. What's more they will be able to carry out more complicated bookings, with multiple legs, than they would be able to do on a supplier's site, says **Guyck van Heerden**, md of EZ Shuttle.

Ceo of Travellinck **Roderick Ross** reveals that logistics behind shuttle services are a great deal more complicated than people might imagine, which is part of the reason why the new offering is such a considerable feat, and also why it is the first time a service of this kind is available in SA.

## LH premium economy opens for sale

**L**UFTHANSA has opened bookings for its premium economy cabin. The product will be available on the Johannesburg route from April next year.

From December 10, premium economy class will be available on all flights served by the new B747, from January on the A340, and from April the A380.

## News flash...

■ AIR Namibia will open its own commercial offices in South Africa from July 1. The airline ended its five-year relationship with Aviareps in May.

Air Namibia's steady growth in the SA market prompted the move, says **Michéll Fourie**, commercial manager of sales and marketing for SA. She will lead the airline's new local team, which comprises eight staff members.

■ A NEW conference centre with 20 venues that is able to accommodate 1 900 delegates is planned for Century City. Along with a 125-room hotel, the Century City Conference Centre will form part of a R1bn mixed-use development in the Bridgeways precinct in Cape Town.

It is scheduled for completion by end-2015. The first conferences should be hosted by early 2016.

■ KENYA Airways will be deploying its new B787-800 Dreamliner on the Nairobi-Johannesburg route from July.

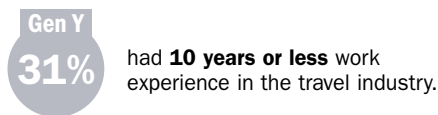
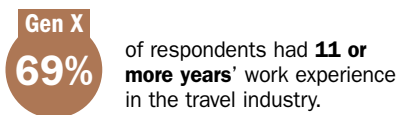
**Rosemary Adogo**, KQ area manager for Southern Africa, says: "The new B787-800 has a capacity of 234 passengers, which is a substantial increase when compared to the B737-700 currently in use on this route." KQ has also re-introduced direct flights to Zanzibar from Nairobi. ■

# Where our travel industry stands today... and what the future could hold

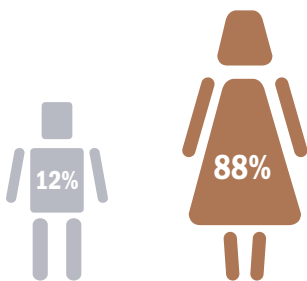
The SA retail travel industry is facing a serious skills shortage, struggling to recruit, develop and hold on to young talent. What does the future of travel look like in South Africa? Who is the future of travel? *Travel Buyer's* sister publication, *Travel News Weekly*, surveyed 462 travel agents and 50 corporate travel buyers in a revealing state-of-the-industry report, which was presented at the recent Asata conference 2014.

## Travel agents who participated in the survey...

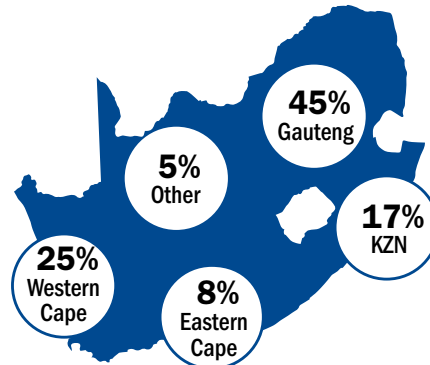
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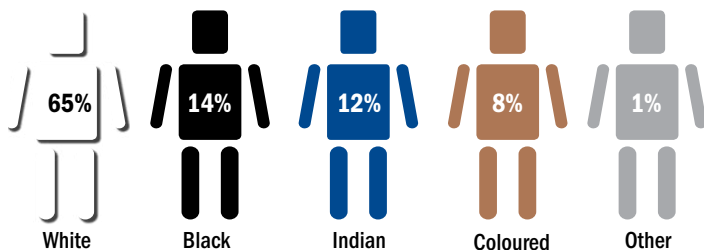
### Gender



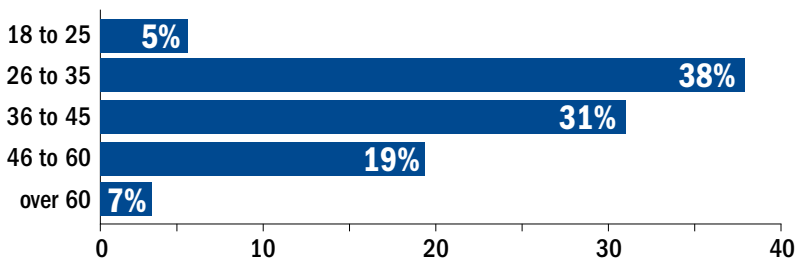
### Place



### Race



### Age



▶ Survey continues on p4

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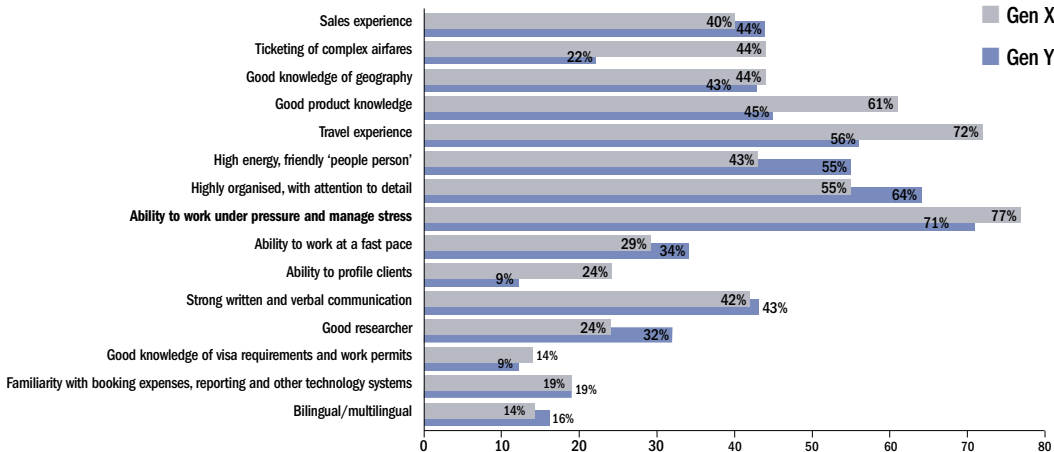
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## Skills

Both groups of travel agents were asked to rate themselves on what their top-five strongest skills were.



BOTH groups feel their strongest skill is the ability to work under pressure and manage stress.

The majority of Gen Y respondents did not rate good knowledge of geography and ticketing complex fares as one of their strongest skills, whereas Gen X participants rated

themselves highly in these areas.

Both groups rated their adequacy in sales skills further down the list but Gen Y was slightly more confident, with 44% of respondents listing it as a top-five skill. 40% of Gen X respondents listed sales as one of their top strengths.

Both groups rated the ability

to profile clients low on the list of skills they have. Only 24% of Gen X and 9% of Gen Y listed this as one of their top strengths.

82% of Gen Y participants thought they had enough training to adequately do their job, while 48% of Gen X thought young consultants should have more access to training.

## How often do you travel?



### TRAVEL agents don't travel.

Both Gen X and Gen Y said they either travelled once a year, or never!

The majority of respondents (both groups combined) said they travelled once a year (47%). A huge 33% of participants said they never travel. 17% said they travelled three or four times a year, whereas only 3% travelled once a month or week.

### Did you know?

*THE travel agent of the future is customer-centric, multifaceted, works well under pressure, gives attention to detail, is willing to learn, is passionate about travel and can think outside the box. These are some of the characteristics Gen X respondents listed when asked what skills and attributes they see the future travel consultant exhibiting.*

### Salaries How much do you earn?

THE majority of Gen Y consultants who participated in the survey said they earned between R5 001 and R8 000 per month (monthly gross, before deductions). 22% said they earned between R11 001 and R16 000 and 8% said they earned between R16 001 and R20 000.

The majority of the more

senior participants (Gen X) indicated they earned between R20 001 and R30 000 (32%). Not surprisingly, Gen X earn more than Gen Y, with around 20% of both groups saying they earned between R11 001 and R16 000.

Only 3% of Gen X participants said they earned over R50 000 a month.



- ▶ I love my job, although the pay is poor compared with other industries: 54%
- ▶ I love my job and I earn a good salary: 31%
- ▶ I'm in travel because I don't know what else to do: 8%
- ▶ I'm slightly dissatisfied with my job but I earn a good salary: 7%

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# What corporates want from travel agents

The relationship between the travel buyer and the TMC is critical. It's important that consultants have the skills to meet the needs of their corporate clients. *Travel Buyer* surveyed 50 corporate travel buyers to find out what skills they require from their travel agent.

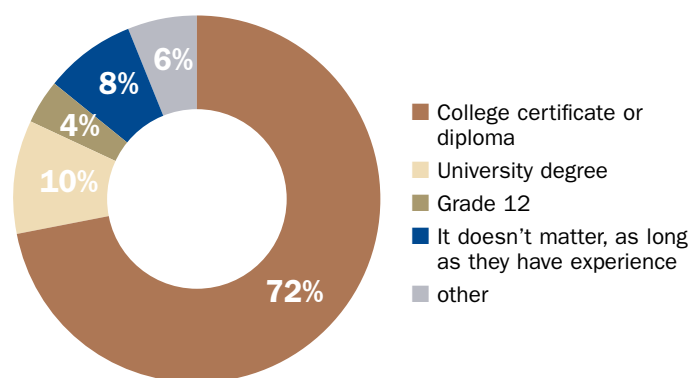
**We welcome feedback on this survey and ideas for future ones.**  
Contact [natashat@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:natashat@nowmedia.co.za)

### Who participated in the survey?

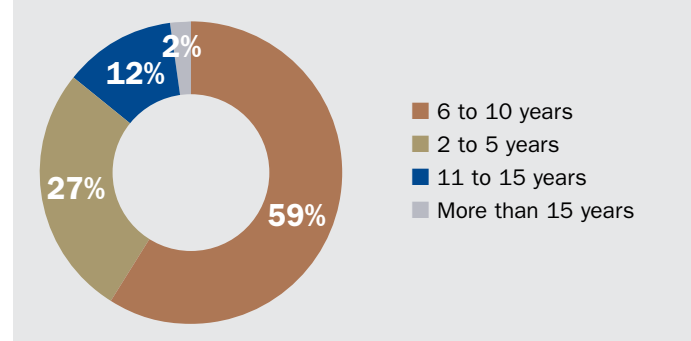
48% of corporate buyer respondents indicated that they had a background in travel, the majority of whom had previously worked as a travel consultant or in a TMC. Others said they had experience working in the airline, hotel and car-rental sectors.

## We want experience!

### What level of qualification do you expect from your corporate travel consultant?

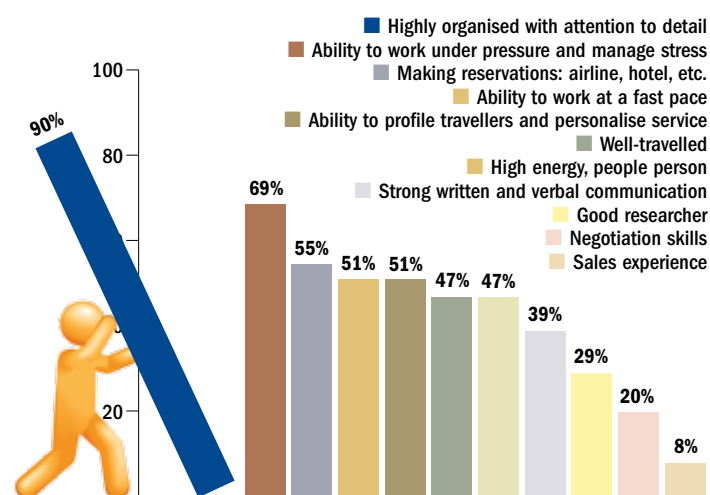


### How many years' work experience do you expect from your consultant?



## Knowledge and skills

### What skills do you think are important for travel consultants to have?



CORPORATE respondents are looking for agents who are organised, have attention to detail, and can work under pressure –

traits often gained with experience. Consultants need to be familiar with ticketing and reservations processes.

### What knowledge do you rely most on your corporate travel consultant having?

- 1 - Product knowledge (airlines, hotels, car rental, etc.)
  - 2 - Geography and destination knowledge
  - 3 - Visa requirements and work permits
  - 4 - Familiarity with bookings, expenses, reporting and other technology systems
  - 5 - Understanding travel policies and budgets
  - 6 - The organising of meetings and events
  - 7 - Languages (bilingual/multilingual)
- 

## Room for improvement

- 1 - Slow turnaround times
- 2 - A lack of attention to detail
- 3 - Not enough 'best-price' options
- 4 - A lack of good product and destination knowledge
- 5 - Not taking initiative
- 6 - Staff turnover, which is disruptive
- 7 - Not well-travelled



THE number-one frustration that most travel buyer respondents listed was slow turnaround times (32%) from corporate travel consultants. Another big frustration was a lack of attention to detail (22%), one of the most important skills that buyers indicated earlier in the survey. ■

"My biggest frustration is slow turnaround times, not getting the best, most cost-effective deal and delays in receiving travel documentation."

"Consultants don't give you enough options. They also don't read the details of the brief for itineraries. I usually have to double check dates, connection times, etc."

"If you are not allocated a specific consultant to deal with your account, and you have to explain everything again to a different agent, this delays the process. You need to build a relationship with your consultant."

# GBTA in a *new space* with *new energy*

By **Michelle Colman**

**J**IM Weighell's stewardship of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Southern Africa heralds the start of a period of reinvention for the association. Weighell assumed the post of director of operations Southern Africa at the beginning of May, after a decade in management with Sure Travel.

His taking up of the reins comes as the advocacy group for travel buyers enters its second seven-year cycle; so points out current chair **Felicity Meyer**, who was instrumental in the GBTA's establishment in Southern Africa back in 2006.

While both leaders agree that GBTA Southern Africa is, to quote Meyer, "good at what we do", they share the opinion that the association could be more effective in spreading the message. Weighell believes GBTA has yet to connect with a multitude of corporate executive assistants and secretaries responsible for large amounts of travel bookings, and is determined to reach out to this sizeable pool.

GBTA Southern Africa's membership comprises all

sectors of the managed business travel sector but its board of directors is led by travel buyers, a fact that sets it apart from competing bodies. The GBTA SA constitution stipulates that travel buyers must be in the majority, with both the chair and vice chairperson positions being restricted to travel buyers only.

While the networking advantages of belonging to an organisation such as GBTA are obvious, Weighell says its membership edge lies in the provision of meaningful educational opportunities, particularly for new entrants to the field of travel procurement.

The local chapter offers an annual programme of general and 'buyers only' workshops, where presenters are chosen for their ability to generate solutions, says Meyer. But going forward, the Southern Africa region is working on a local adaptation of the GBTA Foundation programme, the cornerstones of which are education and research.

The entry level of the programme, the 'Fundamentals of Business Travel Management'

course, became locally available a year ago and focuses on getting the basics right. It can be done online but is most effective when offered in a classroom environment under the guidance of GBTA's appointed trainers. Open to buyers, TMCs and suppliers, it needs a minimum of four participants and runs over two days. Completion earns points towards GBTA's internationally-recognised certification, the Global Travel Professional (GTP). Webinars, online training and courses tailored in conjunction with premier educational institutions are also in Weighell's sights.

On a global basis, GBTA makes available as a free service to members the outcomes of studies on a wide variety of subjects pertinent to business travel. Last year alone, some 100 studies were completed, ranging from the Global Business Travel Index (BTI™) forecasting travel spend in 75 countries and 48 industries, to new tools that benchmark the maturity of technology usage. Meyer says they contain a goldmine of information, but are underused

by Southern African members. Weighell is keen to expand on their content by commissioning research specific to the South African market, and has made this a future goal.

He further points out the benefits of GBTA's Digital Resource Library, which houses over 1 200 research reports, articles, archived webinars and education. The most popular downloads include a TMC sourcing toolkit, a travel safety toolkit and RFP formats.

GBTA will soon commence redevelopment of its website pages, within the global GBTA website, making it more localised and meaningful. And the future possibility of a helpdesk is a real one; currently the secretariat processes queries by linking enquirers up with relevant industry experts.

Weighell plans a more formal structure of GBTA Southern Africa and a closer integration with the association's European region. South African business travel trends are more closely aligned to Europe than the GBTA's home market, the US, he states.



PICTURE: SHANNON VAN ZYL

GBTA Southern Africa board members. Back from left: **Dr Roderick Ross** (TravelLinck), **Felicity Meyer** (Massmart), **Busi Khumalo** (Industrial Development Corporation), **Andrew Shaw** (Amadeus Southern Africa), **Dawn Weir** (Comair) and **Jim Weighell** (GBTA). Front: **Kagiso Dumasi** (BCD Travel SA), **Kovilan Naidoo** (Cummins Business Services) and **Linda Basson** (Accenture).

## Reconciliation a congress theme

RECONCILIATION of all the elements involved in a business trip, and the relevant technology to do so, will come under focus at the GBTA Southern Africa's annual conference, taking place from October 14-16.

The venue and programme are currently being finalised, but attendees can expect a focus on "designing business travel", according to the association's Jim Weighell. "We will look at all the touch points such as trip accounting and overall reconciliation." ■



# Unitrans: building on an effective travel supply chain

**Natasha Henry**, personal assistant and travel manager at Unitrans in Cape Town, updates *Travel Buyer* on her most recent travel management priorities. By **Kim Cochrane**.

## Q: What about travel keeps you awake at night?

**A:** With the recent increase in our travel to the greater Southern Africa region, we've found the lack of infrastructure in certain countries to be problematic in terms of suitable resources and service providers. Our travel is limited to Zambia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania.

An example of a recent challenge was that five of my travellers were due to travel from Johannesburg to Blantyre, Malawi via Lilongwe. Upon arrival in Lilongwe, they were advised that their connecting flight, the only one for the day, had been moved earlier and had already departed. Our travellers had to scour the airport for a transfer company in possession of the relevant driving permit who was able to transport them 400km to Blantyre. So what should have been a 50-minute flight ended up being a five-hour drive on some really terrible roads.

## Q: The most recent upgrade to your travel programme?

**A:** Since the initial roll-out of Travellinck in October 2008, the most significant change after that has been the introduction of an online request and approval module last year, which meant our appointed approvers became a lot more involved in the process.

Implementation of this module has allowed for automation of what was previously a manual process, together with the benefit of a full audit trail. This has been positive in that it has allowed approvers to see exactly what is being spent against their cost centre.



Helping with travel at Unitrans, from left: Melanie Jordan, Natasha Henry and Donna Oakes.

## Q: How is travel currently centralised?

**A:** Travel has been centralised on a regional/provincial level, with bookers in each region/province accountable to the office in Cape Town. All necessary travel requirements are channelled through the relevant booker, who in turn gets approval for all required services via Travellinck. This request is then forwarded to the approver by SMS and e-mail, indicating actual cost of request and missed savings.

Once approved, the booker is notified by e-mail, and is then free to issue the services requested. Airline invoices are immediately available, with online accommodation and car hire immediately confirmed once the order has been approved.

Our company has ten bookers, including myself, and I have now taken on more of a managerial role in terms of analysing reports and statistics from Travellinck as well as finding ways to streamline processes. We sometimes use the Agent Assist

facility to facilitate regional or international bookings.

## Q: What has been the most important benefit of technology?

**A:** Cost control. We as a company are in control of our travel spend. Our travel spend does contribute a fair amount to overall procurement spend but since we have been able to manage spend better through Travellinck, this contribution has reduced. I am responsible for MICE but only for my specified area of responsibility; the balance is managed by each department. At this stage, we are not looking at including MICE in Travellinck.

Integration of company policy and an approval framework in your travel management system will greatly assist in smoothing the path when implementing new technology. Travel bookers and travellers are creatures of habit and change is often met with great resistance but having a firm policy and procedure in place makes this an easier

transition. The rules are the rules. That being said, an intervention will require backing of your management team, which should be easier when the benefits are illustrated through projected cost savings.

## Q: Have you had previous travel experience?

**A:** Many moons ago, I completed a course in travel management. I also had some exposure at previous companies where I worked but to a much lesser degree. When I took on the portfolio at Unitrans, I knew we could be saving money, so this was a good place for me to make a change. It has been fascinating. I love what I do and that helps me do what I do!

## Q: Your most valued achievement?

**A:** Easy! When your boss says to you after returning from a trip: "Hey, thanks for that flight yesterday, it was great, and good seats too!" ■

## CASE STUDY: Beating the budget and exceeding expectations

What do you do when you're asked to organise a highly complex conference with constantly changing requirements on a really tiny budget? **Kaylene Wishnuff**, gm of Midrand Conference Centre, recalls one of her company's most recent challenges in the events game.

**M**IDRAND Conference Centre was approached by a client to host an annual conference. A week-long event, the conference was to bring together members from all over the country. As a result, the centre needed to accommodate 110 delegates, half with partners, as well as an additional number of delegates entering and exiting the venue on a daily basis. Elements involved in the conference included the hire of ten different conference rooms with audio-visual requirements for the duration of the week,

combined meals, shuttle services to and from the airports, and entertainment evenings, including a gala dinner.

### The planning process

Vital to the planning process was a key co-ordinator, one central point of communication who was able to ensure that planning was carried through right down to the smallest details. **Kaylene Wishnuff**, gm of Midrand Conference Centre, says communication is the solid basis on which any successful event is

built and the centre is particularly careful to ensure that briefs are 100% accurate. She notes that in this particular case it also helped that the client was fairly organised as well.

### Challenges and successes

The real challenge for Wishnuff and her team lay in the size of the budget with which they had to work. This meant constant innovation in terms of the way in which the conference's various elements were implemented.

The client's requests were no walk in the park either. Aside from the large number of breakaways needed, the client also requested their own clubhouse, which had to be constructed from scratch within the venue's lapa and rebranded as the personal company bar. What's more they asked for their own personalised registration room, along with a memorabilia shop next door.

When it came to the gala dinner, the client was reluctant to hire another venue. The hall used for one of the day conference sessions had to be turned around in less than an hour from cinema style to banqueting, and this included décor.

Accommodation brought its own challenges as there was a very particular hierarchy within the client's organisation, meaning that the centre had to be extremely careful about how and where they placed guests.

Last-minute changes were the standard order of the day during this conference. One afternoon the client announced that they would like to completely change the evening's itinerary and have a movie evening instead. The conference centre, with the chefs, quickly put together a fun, easy-



PIC: MIDRAND CONFERENCE CENTRE

*Constant innovation in terms of how a conference is implemented is one contribution towards success.*

going menu, made popcorn and provided beverages.

Event organisers under the guidance of the centre's key co-ordinator and her team were required to think of absolutely everything – right down to entertainment for the partners of the directors.

### The results

When the client first approached Midrand Conference Centre they made a point of mentioning that the previous year's conference had been somewhat of a let-down and that they were looking for a significantly improved experience that would make up for the previous year's disappointment. The pressure was on for the conference to be more than just a success.

Wishnuff says not only did the client feel that the conference was a significant improvement on the year before, but that it was in fact the best annual meeting they had ever held.

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Mr. Newyear Ntuli  
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# TRY AN Original Eating conference menu

African Pride Crystal Towers Hotel & Spa has worked with international sports science expert and Original Eating proponent, **Professor Tim Noakes**, to create a new conferencing menu for health-conscious delegates.

**P**ROFESSOR Tim Noakes has become well-known for his low-carb eating plan, which has taken health-conscious South Africans by storm. The plan follows a diet that is low in carbohydrates, high in vegetables and healthy fats and moderate in protein.

Taking healthy conference catering to the next level, Cape Town's African Pride Crystal Towers Hotel & Spa has worked with Noakes to develop an additional conferencing menu that they believe will cater more effectively for the thousands of delegates across South Africa who follow healthy eating plans.

The hotel's new menu features dishes that have been put

together so that they are both healthy and tasty, including items such as poached quail's egg with baby spinach and parmesan cheese; chicken Caesar salad; coconut and almond smoothie; char-sui marinated lamb rack with yoghurt and smoked aubergine.

According to **Danny Bryer**, director of sales, marketing and revenue for African Pride Hotels, healthier eating options are in demand from delegates. Conference snacks and meals are often predominantly starch and sugar based, but more people have become aware that these kinds of meals can affect their health negatively.

"Of course we've listened to

what our guests want and at the end of this exercise we'll be able to offer low-carb conference dishes that fit comfortably into an Original Eating plan," says Bryer.

Noakes praises the hotel's move in recognising the importance of making healthy options available on its conference menu.

The Original Eating logo can be found alongside approved items on the menu, enabling conference delegates to select healthy dishes with ease.



▶ Meet continues on p10

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# How to measure conference ROI

**Helen Brewer**, director of The MICE Academy, gives advice on how conference organisers can effectively measure return on investment.

**T**HERE is increased pressure for measurable return on investment (ROI) as never before. Although many corporates are now flush with funds, financial directors are not keen to lash out and spend indiscriminately.

The reasons for more measurable outcomes are mostly long-standing dissatisfaction with various suppliers and service providers that fail to justify their bottom-line charges and, even worse still, have questionable deliverables against agreements.

## Strategic goals

Goals and objectives are of paramount importance to measuring ROI and should be devised at the very outset or

at least prior to booking any suppliers or services. If goals and objectives cannot be determined, then clearly there is no need for a conference and the corporate should rather send all parties a memo or e-mailed letter to communicate whatever message they wish to impart.

The setting of goals is perhaps the most important aspect of any conference. If you don't know where you are going, how will you know if and when you get there?

## Successful surveys

Post-conference surveys among all stakeholders are essential. There are, however, strict rules for successful survey results.

The proven formula for effective surveys are:

- Survey prepared and ready at the time of setting the goals and objectives.
  - No more than five simple questions with three or more multi-choice answers per question.
  - The survey should be distributed either just before the conclusion of the conference or e-mailed prior to the close of conference.
  - All surveys must have a name identifying the individual survey recipient (the contact details can be cross-checked against registrations).
  - Different survey questions for different stakeholders. For example, different surveys for delegates, presenters, the venue and other suppliers.
- As with the questionable authenticity of venue comments

on TripAdvisor, it is essential for individuals to stand up and be counted and have the courage of their convictions, regardless of whether the conference objectives were met. Anonymous responses can result in inaccurate and, at times, irresponsible feedback.

## Other ROI measurement tools

Comparing standards against costs from previous conferences is a further option. A word of caution, though, is that you should always compare apples with apples. For example, it is not possible to compare a convention centre with a country lodge.

► *Meet continues on p12*

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# PCO Picks: TOP 5 VENUES for gala dinners in Gauteng

**Jim McIntosh**, gm of business development and marketing at Tourvest Destination Management, shares five of his top picks.

## 1. The Forum: The Campus and Turbine Hall



PIC: THE FORUM



PIC: THE FORUM

THE Forum manages two exceptional venues ideal for gala dinner events. Turbine Hall in the centre of Johannesburg's arts and culture precinct, Newtown, started out as a power station for the city in the late 1920s. Its old industrial shell when 'jazzed up' creates a great platform for events with a unique and quirky feel. The venue's function rooms can accommodate dinners of up to 320 guests.

Located at the Campus Office Park in Bryanston, The Campus is a five-star-graded conference and event venue comprising 15 conference and function rooms all with high-quality Internet access. There are five conference rooms, two boardrooms, two auditoriums and six function venues. When it comes to banquets, The Campus can host up to 400 guests.

## 2. Urban Tree



PIC: URBAN TREE

URBAN Tree in Sandton is a trendy venue that comes with a significant amount of décor included in the hire. The open-air section provides great views and its outdoor roof garden, along with its wooden bar, create a great atmosphere. It is able to accommodate up to 500 guests for a gala dinner.

## 3. The Venue Green Park

THE Venue Green Park in Sandton has incredible views of the surrounding city from its location on the 20<sup>th</sup> floor of the World Trade Centre Johannesburg. The Venue is a top choice because of its brilliant pre-event service and superb catering. It can accommodate up to 144 guests for gala dinners, which includes the space required for a stage and dance floor.



PIC: THE VENUE GREEN PARK



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## 4. Scarlet Ribbon



PIC: SCARLET RIBBON

SCARLET Ribbon in Modderfontein is a great option for stylish evening events. Its custom-built staircase and glass lift add to its feel of elegance. Scarlet Ribbon is favoured for its excellent service and the team are meticulous in their attention to detail.

## 5. Focus Rooms

CENTRALLY located in Sunninghill, Focus Rooms offers a wide choice of venues with various capacities. Galaxy Room, the largest venue, can accommodate 250 people banqueting style. Focus Rooms is a top choice because of its unique service offering that draws on out-of-the-box thinking to provide guests with a fun and engaging experience.



PIC: FOCUS ROOMS

# Friendly and modern in Pretoria CBD

We enlisted the help of meetings expert, **Richard Bailey**, to inspect the R8m refurbishment of the Protea Hotel Capital in the Pretoria CBD. After a detailed walkthrough and interviews with key staff, he provided us with his assessment of the venue.



**Richard Bailey** is the owner and md of Meeting Planners International (MPI), a solutions-focused professional conference organiser, venue finder and event management company. MPI services local and international clients in the public, private, academic and association sectors.



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## What Richard Bailey found

**I**'VE never been won over by the Protea Hotel Capital (Van der Walt Street, Pretoria) but after hearing about its recent refurbishment, I had to take a look for myself.

I was welcomed by the broad smile of the guest relations manager and the sophisticated, modern interior that was in contrast to the outer grey façade.

The lobby, reception and lounge areas have a great flow of space and make this medium-size hotel feel grand. The R8m refurbishment definitely shows.

## The conference experience

The six newly refurbished conference rooms on the first two floors of the hotel accommodate a total of 250 delegates. Makhatini, the largest (152 in school-room seating), is on the first floor, with Inverness (30 in school-room style) on the second floor and the remaining rooms on the ground floor. My favourite is Gleneagles (80 in school-room style), a light and refreshing room that is directly opposite the pool area.

The DCP rate of R375 per person exceeds that of neighbouring hotels but don't forget, it is newly refurbished and the rate includes a data projector, homemade biscuits on arrival, pizza and novelty sandwiches mid-morning as well as fruit skewers in the afternoon. It's good to see iced-tea sachets and a variety of sweets on the conference tables, a fresh take on the usual cordials and mints.

### Pros:

- Great lighting
- WiFi is available throughout all conference rooms; 500MB free for the facilitator and

- vouchers can be bought for the delegates
- Soon to have electronic drop-down screens
- Air-conditioned
- Makhatini has a lift nearby, making transporting of materials or equipment easy
- Five of the rooms are disability friendly
- There is a lovely outdoor pool terrace where delegates can have their tea/coffee breaks
- Porter and trolley available to assist with conference material
- Plug points in the floor

### Cons:

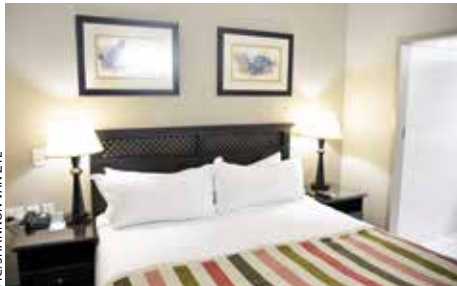
- The rooms have no natural light
- Ceilings are relatively low
- No ceiling-mounted projectors, the old table method is used
- Conference signage could be better. There are, however, many staff around to direct you
- Makhatini has a few structural pillars, something I never like in a venue

## Food, glorious food

The Lairds restaurant is, unfortunately, the only restaurant in the hotel. The food was some of the best I've seen in a three-star hotel, with a good variety of well-presented food that tasted delicious. Compliments to the chef! The kitchen is Halaal friendly. Strict Halaal and Kosher dishes can be ordered.

After spending a few hours at the hotel it was the friendly and helpful staff, cleanliness, and the fantastic new décor that stood out for me.

A solid three-star hotel that punches above its weight. The recent refurbishment has certainly changed it and I strongly urge you to contact one of the marketing staff for a complimentary breakfast and site inspection. ■



*With a single DBB rate of R1 195, this superior three-star hotel offers great value. All 104 rooms have been refurbished in the new look. The rooms are spacious and comfortable with new LCD TV, WiFi, bar fridge, air-conditioning, ceiling fan, carpets and curtains.*

# Consolidation hurts preferred agreements

By Dorine Reinstein

**N**EGOTIATING corporate preferred airline agreements has become a lot more difficult in an increasingly consolidated airline industry, according to a recent Egencia study, 'Corporate Travel in the Consolidated Skies'.

The study shows that the number of carriers has declined dramatically over the last 20 years as a result of airline consolidation. In this post-consolidation era, with fewer airlines and fewer empty seats, it is harder to find deep discounts and disturbingly easy to lose negotiated rates. If companies fail to deliver the load share that they promised, airlines are cancelling contracts, sometimes as early as 90 days after being signed.

US-based travel procurement expert, **Scott Gillespie**, explains any consolidation reduces the number of suppliers, which in turn results in higher airfares. This doesn't necessarily mean that all corporate discounts will decrease. According to Gillespie, as the airline industry stabilises toward three primary competitors: Star Alliance, oneworld and SkyTeam, buyers may find that they have slightly more negotiating power.

**Chris Pouney**, director, Business Travel for Severnside Consulting in the UK, explains it has definitely become harder for travel buyers around the world to

negotiate corporate agreements and discounts with the increase of consolidated airline partners. This has potentially far-reaching impacts for corporate travel managers. "Without being able to negotiate discounts, companies' travel managers are under increasing pressure to justify their very existence through the negotiation of discounted rates."

In Africa, the situation is even more pronounced, Pouney believes. This transpired from a recent study Pouney conducted into the trends, challenges and opportunities of managing travel in Africa that will be published in October this year. "In Africa, with so many monopoly and duopoly routes, we are arguably in an even worse position. Airlines are a low-margin business and they are smart when it comes to who they do and don't give deals to. They are very clever not to dilute revenue they are going to receive anyway, so buyers have to fight hard to be able to demonstrate that without a deal, a buyer has the power to move business to alternative carriers."

Paradoxically, Pouney points out that consolidation in Africa could actually alleviate a lot of the challenges travel buyers are currently facing. He explains in Africa, it's not so much consolidation of airlines that is causing havoc with corporate agreements but rather the lack



PIC: SINGAPORE AIRLINES

*SINGAPORE Airlines has launched a special for MICE groups travelling to Singapore and beyond on Singapore Airlines and SilkAir, where the 16<sup>th</sup> passengers will travel free of charge. This offer is available for group bookings made on or before October 31, 2014 and for travel on or before March 31, 2015.*

of capacity on most routes. Increased consolidation could potentially lead to an increase in capacity, frequencies and routes, and thus more leverage for travel buyers when negotiating agreements.

If travel buyers want to gain back negotiating power with airlines, they need to obtain reliable and good data, he says. "The only thing companies can trade on and negotiate with is

their ability to persuade an airline that they can influence travellers to fly on them more. Without the most basic data, this task is near to impossible. Many companies continue to have multiple TMC suppliers for their African offices, resulting in a lack of visibility of what their offices are spending."

Pouney argues that most airlines will need to have evidence that a company is able to influence travellers to book

## New Schedule ✈ Effective July 2014



Flight	Departure Time	Arrival Time	Day	Aircraft
Johannesburg/Mauritius	13:35	19:35	Daily	Airbus A319/A340
Mauritius/Johannesburg	09:15	11:45	Daily	Airbus A319/A340
✈ Johannesburg/Mauritius ✈	09:40	15:40	Sat & Sun	Airbus A319/A340
✈ Mauritius/Johannesburg ✈	17:00	19:35	Fri & Sat	Airbus A319/A340



their airline. He illustrates this by saying that most companies in South Africa will have a deal with SAA. In order for SAA to make the same deal available to a company's regional office in Kenya for example, the company will need to show evidence that they can persuade their Kenyan travellers, who at the moment are loyal to Kenyan Airways, to travel on SAA. That is going to be a challenge.

"If we're going to get airlines interested in deals, we need to show them the money from a regional perspective. We need to show them the data. Unfortunately, not too many companies are good at doing that."

Procurement manager Africa

Projects at Puma Energy, **Alan Reid**, says airlines now want guaranteed volumes on routes and are getting more difficult to negotiate with as routes are getting fuller and competition is reducing. He agrees that accurate forecasts and historic data are the best way for corporates to successfully negotiate contracts within consolidated skies.

Gillespie agrees that the biggest challenge is recognising realistic market share or volume targets. "Buyers need to have a very practical sense of what they can deliver, and not overstate their ability. Buyers who cannot meet their commitments are weakening their future ability to obtain healthy discounts."

## Focus on the TMC

The focus has shifted to the TMC to manage and sort air preferences and ensure business travellers choose the preferred carrier, says **Mark Hollyhead**, Egencia's senior vp for the Americas.

"To maximise air contract discounts, it will be increasingly important for corporate travel managers to make travellers aware of their preferred carriers and to ensure these air partners appear at the top of their booking displays."

Hollyhead adds that although the fundamentals of travel management haven't changed, the ability to manage air preferences should. "A 21<sup>st</sup>

century TMC should be able to attractively display clients' preferred choices within the booking tool, with integrated approvals and real-time reporting on compliance. The ability to control 'sort order display' should be in the hands of the travel manager to act quickly and adjust when necessary."

GBTA Southern Africa's **Jim Weighell** argues that companies meet targets where compliance is mandated and enforced within the company's HR policy from the top down. "Unless this discipline is in place, it is very difficult for the TMC to enforce policy," he says, adding that the key to cost saving is for the company's internal protocols to

► feature continues on p16

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► feature continues from p15

set the parameters for acceptable booking behaviour. The TMC can however advise on the 'best-fit' policy relative to the company's objectives and culture.

Weighell admits it is important for companies and TMCs to collect reliable data, as airlines are getting better at enforcing contractual terms, with a better handle on profit objectives and associated

reporting. "I think airlines are looking to apply greater discipline in enforcing the terms of contract where airfare discounts are being negotiated. Improved management information allows carriers to monitor performance more closely. Historically corporations have wittingly or unwittingly provided 'inflated' traffic estimates, which significantly affect regional airline budgeting."

Despite the fact that airlines

have become more discerning in renewing agreements, **Collin Austin**, Club Travel business development executive, says in this market, suppliers are still very interested in the corporate business simply because the yield from this sector is still higher than the average yield.

According to Austin, companies need to put in place a solid corporate travel policy if they want to negotiate corporate agreements with airlines.



### Pay Economy, Fly Business with Air Mauritius

AIR Mauritius has launched a special where travellers can pay Economy Class fares of R4 140 but fly in Business Class between Johannesburg and Mauritius.

The special excludes taxes and surcharges, and is valid for travel until August 8, 2014. The airline also has a Winter Special with fares of R2 100 excluding taxes and surcharges for a return trip between Johannesburg and Mauritius for travel from July to September 26. ■

## How to negotiate good contracts in a consolidated environment

1. Hire a trusted industry expert to analyse the contract terms and market share goals airlines request.
2. Get your arms around the data. Either you need a consolidated approach to TMCs or you need to appoint a data consolidator to take a feed of data from your TMC's credit card companies and/or GDS.
3. Negotiate for a higher discount by demonstrating that you, the buyer, can move more market share than the airline is giving you credit for.
4. Do not soil the ocean. Negotiate only those parts of your airline spend that:
  - Have sufficient volume to be of interest to the airlines, and
  - Have sufficient profit margin to be of interest to the airlines, and
  - Have sufficient competition to be of concern to the airlines
5. Look at the travel policy that the company has in place and make sure that the policies are aligned throughout the region.
6. Ensure compliance.



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# Nigeria is open for business

Travel Buyer's **Kate Nathan** travelled to Lagos, Nigeria as the guest of SAA and Tsogo Sun, spending four days experiencing the thrilling energy of Africa's powerhouse.

**T**HE Nigeria - South Africa Chamber of Commerce has one main purpose and that is to ease trade between the two countries, says **Osayaba Giwa-Osagie** (pictured), who heads up the chamber. "Where there are impediments, we help to remove them, speaking to the authorities and ensuring the citizens of both countries are able to travel with the least possible hindrance. A lot of emphasis



has been on the oil and gas industry, which accounts for 80% of the Nigerian economy but there are many opportunities opening up in agriculture, mining, infrastructure, tourism and in the film industry." Giwa-Osagie says while there are several formal Nigerian businesses in SA, there are many more South African businesses in Nigeria, which with its population of 170m has staggering potential as a market.

This is his advice to South African companies wanting to enter the market:

- While it is not mandatory to have a local partner (except in the oil and gas business), Giwa-Osagie recommends companies involve a reputable local partner for on-the-ground knowledge and local connections.
- South Africans wanting to open in Nigeria will benefit by approaching the chamber first, even before coming to

the country. Local members of the chamber are subject to due diligence and financial audits.

- The chamber will point out potential partners, help arrange introductory meetings and assist with legal requirements.
- Know your business/product well and have a good business plan.
- You need high standards, a good brand, a niche market orientation and a good management team.

## West Africa hub is the prize for SAA

**T**HE cost of operations can be high for airlines operating in Africa but South African Airways (SAA) is not daunted. Monopolies by ground handlers as well as pricing and availability of aviation fuel are just some of the obstacles.

SAA currently has 24 routes into the continent and more are on the cards, says **Ohis Ehimiaghe**, the airline's regional manager: North, West and Central Africa.

In its West Africa schedule, the national carrier will be increasing frequencies out of Johannesburg to Kinshasa in July and Lagos will receive eight flights per week from August. Abidjan has recently been increased to three flights weekly out of Johannesburg.

SAA has for a time been seeking a West Africa hub as a critical part of its Africa Growth Strategy, with Lagos, Accra

and Dakar in the running. It had considered buying a stake in Senegal Airlines but that was not commercially viable. At the time of going to press, the money seemed to be on Accra. SAA has recently confirmed that it is considering buying a stake in the privately owned airline, Asky (in which SAA's Star Alliance partner, Ethiopian Airlines, holds a strategic stake), which currently operates from Lomé in Togo. SAA has plans for discussions with both Ethiopian Airlines and Asky to investigate the feasibility of such a venture, according to **Tladi Tladi**, SAA spokesperson.

One idea that SAA is investigating is that of partnering with Ghanaian investors to acquire part of Asky and then relocating the airline to Accra. A West African hub would be useful in terms of giving the



From left: **Thobi Duma**, SAA's country manager for Nigeria; **Ohis Ehimiaghe**, the airline's regional manager, North, West and Central Africa; **Kim Thipe**, SAA head marketing; and **Kemi Leke-Bamtefa**, SAA head of sales and marketing, Nigeria.

airline a central geographic presence, allowing it to compete on the high-demand Transatlantic routes, scooping

passengers from all over Africa across the Atlantic to the Americas, and northwards to Europe.

► feature continues on p18



► feature continues from p17

# Southern Sun shines in Lagos

**T**SOGO Sun's commitment to Lagos is clear, even though it has no immediate plans to acquire or develop more properties in Nigeria or West Africa over and above Southern Sun Ikoyi.

**Andrew Hosking**, Tsogo Sun's offshore operations director, says when Southern Sun Ikoyi opened in 2009, the group's only involvement was a management contract but in 2013 it invested R700m in acquiring 75.5% of the hotel with the remainder held by its local partner. "Whereas many hotel groups now entering the Nigeria market have done so with management contracts, we have invested in the property, and now we plan to consolidate. But, while we have no immediate plans to increase our

presence in West Africa, we are always looking for prospects."

Lagos's infrastructural problems are well documented. These challenge all businesses, especially hotel operators who need to prioritise the comfort of guests. The property is independent of city services, with its own generators, sewage and water purification plants, which is a real comfort in a city where power outages sometimes come six times in an hour. "We run on generators around 40% of the time," says Hosking.

Growth of the hotel has been good, he adds. Considering it opened during a dearth of hotel rooms in Lagos, it has since then sustained high occupancy (more than 70%) and it has been able to maintain its rates and grow the business.

**Marcel von Aulock**, Tsogo



Southern Sun Ikoyi's restaurant

PIC:TSOGO SUN

Sun ceo, told *Travel Buyer* that offshore operations were responsible for 20% of the group's hotel business's revenue and operating profit, and the Ikoyi property alone was responsible for 50% of this.



## COMMENT: Arrivals at Lagos can be easy

LANDING at Murtala Muhammed International Airport can be a bewildering experience.

Travellers, especially first-timers, can only benefit by the services of a reputable and efficient destination management company, such as Sure Platform, which provides a range of services, including those relating to security, airport transfers, chauffeured vehicle rental, journey management, plus immigration services, family support, company registrations, airline reservations and property rentals. Visit [www.sureplatform.com](http://www.sureplatform.com), or contact [i.venter@sureplatform.com](mailto:i.venter@sureplatform.com).



Southern Sun Ikoyi will organise and cater small functions at the Lagos yacht club

PIC:KATE NATHAN

## TO NOTE:

MANY South Africans are concerned about the security situation following recent terrorism events in Nigeria.

While the nature of terrorism makes it impossible to predict where the next incident will be, travellers to Lagos should be aware that the area where most Boko Haram terrorism activity takes place is in an area that lies 1 600km to the

north east of Lagos. That said, travellers must be prepared for levels of security higher than those we have in SA.

Office buildings, supermarkets, shopping malls and public buildings have security checkpoints. The Lagos airport has high security and many queues. Arriving at the airport with four hours to spare before your flight is advisable.

## A home away from home

A GREAT deal of Southern Sun Ikoyi's hotel business is about accommodating South African business travellers and it has become a firm favourite for South Africans in Nigeria, says **Andrew Hosking**, Tsogo Sun's offshore operations director.

The property has a familiar, South African feeling and is filled with the style, décor and service that South Africans associate with the iconic brand. But it also has a wider reputation among Lagos residents for its food and beverage services, with Sunday brunch being hugely popular.

The hotel has 195 rooms, furnished to a high-design specifications. A pool and a fitness centre add to guests' comfort, and the restaurant serves high-quality international cuisine, along with West African favourites and some typically South African treats. And for those working really late, there is 24-hour room service. Some of the rooms are suites, which have access to a private Club Lounge on the ninth floor where a continental breakfast is served daily from 07h00 to 09h00, also with complimentary snacks and beverages served from 18h00 to 21h00.

Given the cost of data when roaming, an important feature for travellers is reliable, usable and affordable WiFi and here, once again, this property excels, giving all guests complimentary access.

The business centre has conference and meeting facilities, which can be booked for small meetings and functions for 100, cinema-style or cocktail. ■

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# Protecting personal info: *WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW*



The Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act can potentially have far-reaching consequences for the industry, writes **Dorine Reinstein**.

**T**HE POPI Act, which was officially signed into law at the end of last year but isn't effective yet, could see travel agents who accidentally or purposely leak information about their clients facing fines of up to R10m and jail sentences of up to ten years.

POPI regulates the manner in which personal information may be processed and provides rights and remedies to protect this information.

The Act applies to every business that processes (collects, disseminates or merges) personal information (passport numbers, names, phone numbers, race, gender, etc.) and special personal information of the 'data subject' (client) 'entered into a record' (such as e-mails and hard copies) by or for a responsible person (the travel agent) who determines the purpose and means of such processing (to book flights, hotels, car rental).

The Act will have its very own regulator in the near future. The regulator will deal with consumer complaints and with appeals concerning breaches of the law.

**Gareth Cremen**, partner at Ramsay Webber attorneys, says the regulator will be a "mean

machine", as the fines imposed for non-compliance can be anything up to R10m. In the worst-case scenario, travel agents, tour operators, hotels and/or airlines could even find themselves behind bars for up to ten years for disseminating their clients' information.

The powers of regulators will be far-reaching. They can demand access to a travel agent's offices for the premises of conducting an investigation. They may also approach a court of competent jurisdiction and obtain a warrant to conduct an investigation. They can also stop a travel agent from processing information, which will effectively mean the travel agent will have to close its doors.

You need the consent of the consumer to process their personal information! Put the necessary policies and procedures in place and don't deviate from the rules.

**Some tips that will help travel agencies with compliance:**

## 1. Adjust your terms and conditions

Insert clauses into your current

terms and conditions that stipulate that your agency will be collecting personal information as well as special personal information as defined by the POPI Act. Don't forget to mention the reason why you need to collect information: to secure bookings with third party service providers.

Agreements must be concluded with all suppliers surrounding information being provided to them and ask for them to indemnify you in the event that there is a breach.

## 2. Install cookie pop-ups

If you are dealing with online bookings from customers be sure to have a cookie policy and also ensure that your online terms and conditions have been updated. Install pop-ups that warn your customers that you are collecting their personal information. Include a disclaimer that outlines that, by logging on to the site, the client consents to sharing his information but, remember, consent is needed where information is being collected and sent outside South Africa.

## 3. Invest in security software

Travel consultants tend to move around a lot in the industry, from one job to the next.

This trend carries an inherent risk that the consultant takes along client information to the competitor and it is up to the owner or manager to limit the risk of clients' information being leaked. Once a breach has occurred, the travel agent has an obligation to report the breach to the regulator and client.

## 4. Appoint an information officer

It is imperative that travel agencies appoint a dedicated person within their company as the information officer, Cremen says. This person will be responsible for enforcing the POPI Act and implementing the privacy policy within the company. Ideally the information officer should be the only person to access and process payments on behalf of clients.

Always ask the appointed information officer and employees processing information to

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indemnify you in case there is a breach of the information that only they have access to.

## 5. Get it in writing

Travel agents need to officially notify clients about the type of information they collect about them and why. If problems arise, the onus will be on the travel agent to prove the client gave his consent to store the information.

This notification can be a simple booking form. Outline on your booking form the information you need and include a notice that reads: "Please refer to our privacy policy and terms and conditions, which deal with the manner in which your personal information is stored. The purpose of collecting, disseminating and merging is contained therein."

Crement says the fact that the agency has a privacy policy in place will not be enough to protect it. Problems arise when clients phone the travel agent requesting an urgent flight ticket, as a telephonic conversation won't be sufficient proof of consent.

He advises agents do the booking and send the client an e-mail, preferably with a delivery receipt recording the transaction and stating in the e-mail: "As per our conversation, you confirm (i) having understood and agreed to our privacy policy and standard terms and conditions; and (ii) that we may proceed with your booking/reservations on your behalf in accordance with our privacy policy and standard terms and conditions. We informed you during the telephone call that we do collect information in line with the POPI Act and by doing so you hereby consent to us utilising

same for the purpose as set out in our privacy policy and standard terms and conditions etc."

## 6. Adjust agreements

Travel agents are not allowed, under the POPI Act, to reveal any personal and/or special personal information to third parties. What happens if a jealous wife wants to know where the husband is vacationing with his mistress? What do you do when the ceo of a big corporate client phones asking where his employee is and what he is using the company's credit card for?

Every company and person in the agency – anyone handling client information – should study the definition of 'personal information' and 'special personal information' as defined in the POPI Act. For example, agents cannot divulge information to their client's wife unless the husband has signed an agreement that all information can be passed on.

It is advisable to have agreements in place with corporate clients whereby the company gives you the permission to do all future bookings for the company and their employees.

Companies must ensure that they have the requisite permission and/or consent from their employees in order to hand over information on all bookings made by the company, irrespective of who the employee is. What happens if the company makes a booking for a third party outside their employ?

## 7. Destroy information

The Companies Act states that travel agents need to keep

## The travel buyer's perspective:

ACCORDING to **Monique Swart**, ABTA founder, although travel procurement managers have started expressing an interest to learn about the new POPI Act, few have actually started considering what they need to do to comply with it.

Swart explains companies will from now on need to stipulate with employees in a signed agreement when and why their personal information will be used. It is important, for example, that the travellers' whereabouts are disclosed in case of an emergency, or for tracking purposes.

The POPI Act could present

a challenge in that companies may no longer ask for personal information pertaining to travel consultants when going out to tender.

"Companies used to be able to ask a travel agent to list their consultants' details, contact info and education level. This is apparently going to be an issue.

"Lastly, companies will need to ensure they adhere to the proper regulations on how to erase employees' details, for example if employees leave the company or in the event of an unsuccessful bid from a travel agent.

documents on file for five years. However, there is a conflict as, according to the POPI Act, travel agents can't keep documents for longer than is necessary to render services.

The solution to this is to notify the consumer in writing that his/her information will be filed away for five years, after which it will be destroyed. During that period, nobody else will have access to that information. If the client requests to be removed from the database, comply with this.

## 8. Foresee risks

According to the POPI Act, companies need to be able to foresee both internal and external risks to the clients' information.

What are the risks involved in your business? How do you stop employees selling off credit card information and personal information to third parties? What firewalls have been established by your IT department? What happens if your laptop/ employee's laptop has been stolen?

If there is a breach and the

regulator asks you to prove the steps you've taken to prevent the offence, you will need to show all possible measures taken by you to identify and prevent the offence from occurring.

## 9. In case of a breach

If a breach of information took place and a client's information was compromised, both the client and the regulator need to be alerted immediately.

## 10. Seek legal advice

Travel agencies will be held liable for non-compliance with the POPI Act, regardless of whether or not there was an intention to leak information or whether it was negligence. To ensure that you are 100% compliant with the POPI Act and that the weaknesses within your company are addressed, it is advisable to seek legal advice.

It is also suggested that companies train all relevant employees on the POPI Act and the procedures implemented by the company. ■



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# More grey than green

By Michelle Colman



**Keith Rankin,**  
ceo of Avis Rent a  
Car Southern Africa



**Gill Dewar, md of**  
GCD Consultants



**Kovilan Naidoo,**  
senior internal  
auditor for EMA,  
Cummins Business  
Services



**Duncan Pritchard,**  
head of ETC-Africa



**Andre Harms,**  
principal engineer,  
Ecolution Consulting

**I**N THEORY, the corporate world claims to support environmentally friendly practices and green consciousness. It is, to coin a slogan, 'the right thing to do'. But in practice, going green often entails high costs and considerable effort, and takes focus away from primary business goals. Good intentions aside, SMMEs in particular find themselves doing little more than paying lip service to the concept.

**Duncan Pritchard**, who heads up Durban-based carbon footprint consultancy, ETC-Africa, says take-up of measures to combat carbon emissions and institute green practices remains slow. Furthermore, the postponement of a carbon tax, coupled with the tough economic climate, have taken the urgency out of situation.

"We really need to look at creating very attractive incentives for smaller business to adopt best practice with regard to environmental management and climate change," he states. "Incentives for small business are key to getting this urgent issue into day to day business practice."

## Does environmental consciousness play a role in your travel policy?

Not at this stage, responds **Kovilan Naidoo**, senior internal auditor for Europe, Middle East and Africa at Cummins Business Services and president of the GBTA in Africa. This, he says, is due to the costs involved and because the company's policy is a global one that would have to be adapted worldwide.

A very different experience is related by Hotel Verde outside Cape Town International Airport, which as a new development, could

build environmental sustainability into every aspect of operation from the get go. The hotel bills itself as "Africa's greenest hotel", and showcases many environmental building firsts on the continent.

States **Andre Harms**, principal engineer of Ecolution Consulting, who worked on the hotel: "We were fortunate enough to be able to design Hotel Verde from scratch. This made it an easier task to introduce sustainable measures from 'below the ground up', to consider and implement these in every aspect of the hotel. This, however, should never stop someone with an existing building. It is certainly possible to rethink the status quo and whilst it may cost more in some areas, we should battle the preconceived notion that every green initiative takes extra cost and effort. There are synergies and better ways of doing the same."

## Are clients demanding more environmentally friendly services?

**Gill Dewar**, md of GCD Consulting, an incentive house, states that the subject has always been topical among her clientele but she is not aware of anyone actually taking it to the next level during an incentive. Aspects such as convenience, price and product always pip environmental consciousness at the post, and if green services and products cost more, they are difficult to justify. "Everyone would like to be green but to be honest I don't think they really know how to do it and so they don't."

Her response is echoed by her colleague, **Karen Shackman** of US-based Shackman Associates New York, who states demand for green incentives does not even seem to be

an item on requests for proposals.

Avis also reports a customer base more concerned with costs than carbon footprint. It would appear that cost control and savings are a bigger focus area for most corporate renters as opposed to renting more environmentally friendly vehicles, says **Keith Rankin**, ceo for Southern Africa. While the company has seen shifts to more environmentally friendly renting patterns, such as demand for smaller vehicles and vehicle sharing, the motivation is not green concern. "Unfortunately this is mostly driven by cost and not environmental factors."

## What green initiatives have you undertaken at little cost, that other corporates could consider?

Greening a company's travel policy can involve expense, but in many instances saves money. Pritchard recommends the following steps:

- Do an energy audit, or at least a baseline greenhouse gas inventory. This is not expensive and there are hundreds of great online tools and experts to help. This will identify areas of wastage and improve efficiency.
- Train staff. Staff need to understand the issues and support a more efficient and environmentally friendly approach.
- Ask suppliers questions on their efficiency and carbon footprint. It may not be a huge concern now but a close look at your value chain will be a very important risk-analysis issue in years to come.

Pritchard points out that with China having committed to a massive reduction in fossil fuels usage,

*Greening initiatives at Hotel Verde include solar panels positioned to provide shade as well as power, a grey water recycling plant reducing potable water use by 37%, a rainwater filtering and capture system, elevators running on a regenerative drive and provision of 100% carbon-neutral accommodation and conferencing. The hotel, a member of the BON group, holds platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, an internationally recognised green building rating system. Pictured is the hotel's eco pool.*



PIC: HOTEL VERDE





and the US aiming to reduce its carbon emissions by 30% by 2030 (all against a backdrop of the worst floods, cyclones and winter storms ever recorded in the past 12 months), we can expect a sense of urgency for business to start doing things in a new way.

Dewar offers this list of carbon-saving considerations for incentive buyers:

- To host a local conference, choose a city where most of your staff live so fewer people have to travel on flights, stay in hotels and use motor coaches
- Ask the venue what their energy saving initiatives are – the more people ask the more likely the supplier will eventually comply
- Open windows where possible, rather than use air conditioning

- Request locally produced food and beverages
- Ensure suppliers have a waste-management system for paper and food waste
- Ask hotel staff to reuse linen and tell participants to switch off lights, televisions and air conditioning when they leave their rooms.

At conferences, adds Dewar, take steps such as serving water in glass jugs and not plastic bottles, avoid the use of stationery or disposable cutlery and crockery, recycle nametags and lanyards, and use websites and apps to distribute information.

Cummins, reports Naidoo, is trying to reduce its travel expense by utilising videoconferencing, which reduces carbon imprint.

Avis recycles water at its major turnaround facilities and the

harvest of rainwater enables the company to save 100m litres of water per year. Further, states Rankin, "we have installed heat pumps to reduce the amount of electricity we use to heat water".

### Are we still on course for the imposition of emissions tax in 2015?

Responds Pritchard: "Sadly, no. The feeling, driven by big business, was that the carbon tax scheme was not yet ready for implementation and could have a negative economic impact and additional financial burden, especially for the big emitters. Government has sent the document back for review and further consultation with a vision of 2016 implementation."

AS the majority of a corporate travel footprint occurs from air travel, it is in this sphere that a company can make the most difference to its overall travel carbon footprint, says **Kerry Wright** of Cleaner Climate, a carbon-offset consultancy.

Obviously, decreasing the number of flights booked by a company is the most effective means of reaching this goal but even reducing class of travel has an impact.

Says Wright: "Travelling economy class instead of business or first class has a lower carbon footprint for the same flight. By way of example – a return economy class flight JHB-LHR has a footprint of 0.8tCO<sub>2</sub>, whereas a business class return is 2.32tCO<sub>2</sub>." ■



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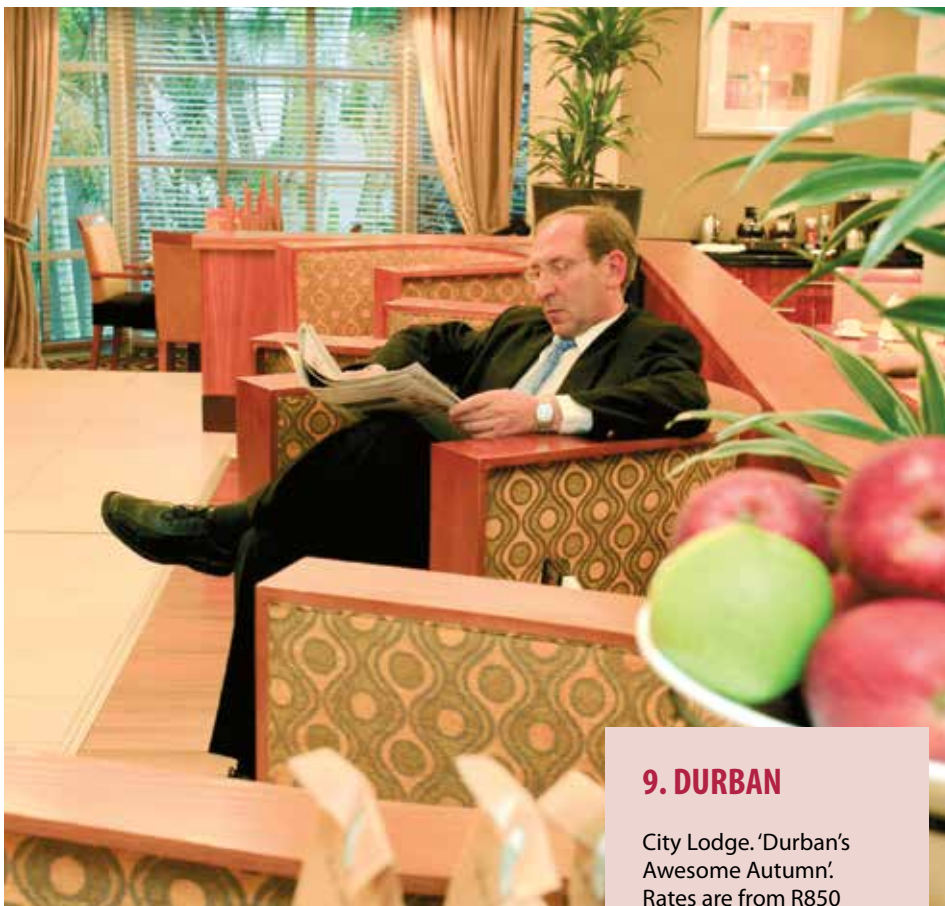
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# Top 10 specials

**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. Just book through your TMC and tell the consultant it's a Travelinfo special. To get connected, e-mail [lindav@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:lindav@nowmedia.co.za).



PIC: CITY LODGE

## 1. CAPE TOWN

Thompsons Holidays. 'Love Cape Town City Breaks'. Fly-in packages include return flights on Mango Airlines, two nights' accommodation, meals as specified plus two days' car rental. Prices are from R2 785 pp sharing. Add airline levy of R472 for travel ex-JNB/DUR/PLZ. Book and pay by July 31. Valid for travel until August 31.

## 2. DUBAI

Emirates Airline/Holidays. Dubai summer specials – valid until September 30. Stay three nights for the price of two nights. Three-night packages are from \$39 (R417) pp per night in a twin room. Rate includes airport transfers and select meals. Plus 'Kids Go Free', allowing up to two children under 16 years to stay, play and dine for free at selected hotels and restaurants.

## 3. MOZAMBIQUE

Holiday Tours. Mozambique – Massinga Beach special. Pay

for four nights, stay for five nights. Rates are from R13 220 pp sharing including taxes of R2 759. Offer includes return flights ex-JNB to Inhambane, return road transfers (about two hours), accommodation in an ocean-front deluxe room including all meals, one romantic turndown on arrival, one private in-room deck dinner and one beach picnic. Offer expires September 30.

## 4. MALAYSIA

Travel Vision. Kuala Lumpur special – five nights from R13 472 pp sharing. Rate is inclusive of return airfare ex-JNB on Singapore Airlines, airport taxes, five nights at the four-star Capitol Hotel with breakfast and private return airport transfers. Offer is valid until August 31.

## 5. CAPE TOWN

Sun International Dreams. Table Bay winter special valid until September 30. Rates are from R2 390 pp sharing. Offer includes two nights' midweek accommodation in a luxury

king or luxury twin room plus return transfers between Cape Town International Airport and the hotel.

## 6. SYDNEY

World Stays & Events. Five-night package – rates are from R3 880 pp sharing. Offer is valid until December 31.

## 7. MPUMALANGA

Three Cities Greenway Woods Resort in White River. Family getaway special – rates are from R5 950 per chalet for a five-night stay, room-only basis. Deluxe rooms (two people sharing) are from R4 950 per five-night stay on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. Offer expires July 31.

## 8. VIETNAM

On the Go Tours. Ten-day Vietnam tour from R19 980 pp sharing valid for August 9 departure. Price includes return airport transfers, seven nights' accommodation in a four-star hotel with select meals,

## 9. DURBAN

City Lodge. 'Durban's Awesome Autumn'. Rates are from R850 per room per night. Road Lodge rates are from R500 per room per night. Offer is valid until July 31 (excludes July 4-6). Promotional code FUNSEASON. Available for online bookings only.

accommodation for one night in both a deluxe junk boat and an overnight sleeper train, domestic flight Danang- Ho Chi Minh City, Halong Bay junk boat cruise (swim, kayak, explore caves) and bicycle ride to Tra Que Village. Guided sightseeing: Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hue, Ho Ain, Mekong Delta and Ho Chi Minh City.

## 10. PRETORIA

The Villas Luxury Suite Hotel. Weekend special: rates are from R995 for two people in a luxury suite. Rates include breakfast and are valid until August 31. ■

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



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