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Editor's note

It really does feel as if the world has gone crazy. Just scanning through the headlines over the course of the past month is enough to make corporate travellers want to barricade themselves inside their homes – from America's worst mass shooting in history, to floods in Paris and even Euro 2016 soccer riots on the streets.

Is anywhere safe these days? This is the question **Nick Piper**, director of Signal Risk, answered during a recent Abta Corporate Travel Forum, focusing on some of the emerging threats corporate travellers face. From 'lone-wolf' attacks to Uber riots, there are a number of new risks that corporate travel managers need to take into account to ensure their travellers remain safe and secure at all times.

But as we all know, even the best-laid plans can go awry, which led to the fascinating second session during the Abta Forum, in which travel managers confided to attendees "what went horribly wrong" and, of course, how they fixed it. From lost passports, to air strikes, tragic fatalities and more, be sure to page through to our Safety and Security feature.

This theme carried through to our Airline Hubs and Networks feature, which took a closer look at whether corporates are shying away from Middle Eastern and North African hubs and instead opting for destinations that are perceived as safer.

For something completely different, **Debbie Badham** set sail on the world's biggest cruise ship, the *Harmony of the Seas*, during its pre-inaugural voyage from Southampton. Is bigger really better? She investigates this and more in her report-back.

Also, be sure to read this month's profile of **Gideon Modutle**, who will soon be moving from the National Department of Public Works to the Gauteng Provincial Department of Infrastructure Development. Having played a role in the formulation of National Treasury's new travel policy framework, he was able to shed some light on the process so far, and how he has implemented the changes in his department.

Keep reading!

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

COVER

Gideon Modutle tells *Travel Buyer* about some of the ways in which travel has evolved in the public sector in recent years. Cover photograph by **Shannon Van Zyl**.

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



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Govt travel behaviour beats private sector – survey

RECENT findings from travel data specialist Agentivity, show that government clients make fewer changes and request fewer cancellations than private businesses.

Agentivity is integrated with Galileo, automatically capturing all agencies' booking activities.

In a snap survey of booking activity in the local market between January 1 and May 1, 2016, Agentivity found some surprising differences between the behaviour of typical government accounts and general corporate accounts. The data shows that government bookings have significantly fewer changes than corporate bookings.

During the specified timeframe, Agentivity found that changes were made to 69% of government bookings compared with 116% of corporate bookings. The difference is that corporate customers tend to make most changes prior to ticketing (56%), whereas government clients tend to make changes post-ticketing (51%) when agents then need to apply for refunds, etc.

In terms of cancellations,

government officials seem to be more conservative, with 17% of government bookings cancelled during the indicated timeframe, compared with 22% of corporate bookings.

When it comes to advance purchase buying behaviour, corporate clients tend to book their travel more than two weeks in advance. Government officials seem to make last-minute decisions with regard to travel, generally booking flights four days prior to travel.

The data was based on over 50 000 newly created government bookings and just over 10 000 newly created corporate bookings. Commenting on the results, **Yolandé Bouwer**, Agentivity's gm for Southern Africa, said: "One would think government travel behaviour would typically incur a very high change rate but it's most surprising to see the corporate sector outsourcing them here by a wide margin.

"The low book-to-travel date gap among government accounts, however, indicates a likely higher average airfare being paid by the

public sector."

TMCs have questioned the results.

One travel agent said: "The reality is just the opposite. Government officials are the masters of change. I handle both corporate clients and government officials. For government clients, change almost seems to be in fashion. Our after-hours department is extremely busy fielding changes to government bookings."

The explanation for these statistics might be that the changes requested by government are not recorded as changes on the Agentivity system, according to the agent.

Bouwer, however, said that Agentivity picked up any or all itinerary changes whenever the PNR was amended. The system picked up changes to airline, routing, flight number, booking class, text within passive sectors, status code, property/hotel name, room rate code, and number of rooms, she said. "We track all types of changes on the GDS, whether touched by the day office or the after-hours team."

SA hotel group expands into Africa

NEWMARK Hotels, Reserves and Lodges is expanding into Africa with the establishment of the group's first office outside South Africa and the creation of the Kaufela Collection in Zambia.

The new office is located in Lusaka and will focus on SADC countries, such as Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Zanzibar.

"The Lusaka office is mandated to develop new territories for Newmark, under either the Kaufela Collection or the Newmark brand depending upon the standard or size of the property," says Newmark's director for Africa, Dr **Hans Heuer**.

The Kaufela Collection has already signed three independent lodges (100 rooms) and plans to add another 400 rooms by the end of the year. Newmark is in the process of taking on a new property in Zanzibar and a further 170-room business hotel in Lusaka.

Newmark ceo, **Neil Markovitz**, says the group's offering will not be compromised: "We turn down more properties than we take on - we're very specific about the product portfolio."



PHOTO: GBTA SOUTHERN AFRICA

GBTA sheds light on new govt measures

GBTA Southern Africa hosted a public sector workshop in Johannesburg on June 2. The line-up included a session on the implementation of the National Treasury's new travel policy framework. Other topics addressed

included lodge card and virtual card applications with a government travel programme, and the role of the travel manager within the procurement department. Pictured here are (from left) **Marcelle Ross**, chief sales officer at Travellinck

and director of operations at GBTA SA; **Phale Naaki**, keynote speaker and co-author of the national travel policy; **Nancy Letlape** from National Treasury; and **Sharon Richards-Lund**, regional account manager at GBTA SA.

More rooms for Emperors Palace

EMPERORS Palace Hotel, Casino, Convention and Entertainment Resort, close to OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, is undergoing further expansion.

Construction has begun on 100 additional rooms for the select-service Peermont Metcourt Hotel at a cost of R112m. The three-star hotel will increase guest rooms to 348, taking the Peermont resort's total room offering to 757 when it is completed in December 2016.

BA ups capacity to match demand

BRITISH Airways is looking to increase capacity during its peak season with additional rotations of the larger A380 aircraft and reconfigured Boeing 737 on its JNB-LHR route. The airline wants to match offering with demand, says **Edward Frost**, regional manager, British Airways South and East Africa.

From November 1 to December 31, 2016 and February 1 to 28, 2017, the airline will deploy an A380 on flights BA54 and BA57 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. A reconfigured Boeing 747 will operate the service on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and

Saturdays. The additional A380 combined with the reconfigured B747 rotations will see an overall increase of nearly 500 seats offered per week during peak season, says Frost.

The A380 offers a total of 469 seats, with 14 in first class, 96 in business and 303 in economy.

The reconfigured Boeing aircraft will operate with 14 first class, 86 club world (business), 30

world traveller plus (premium economy) and 145 world traveller (economy) seats. The change sees an increase of 34 club world seats, as well as a reduction of six seats in world traveller plus and 40 seats in world traveller.

The aircraft will feature refreshed cabins in club world, world traveller and world traveller plus, plus new seat foam in world traveller and world traveller plus. A new in-flight entertainment system on larger high-resolution screens, with touch-and-swipe functionality, has also been added.

From January 1-31, 2017 and March 1-25, 2017 the airline will only operate the reconfigured Boeing 747 on flights BA57 and BA54. An A380 will continue to service flights BA55 and BA56.

Although the number of economy class seats will decrease and business class seats increase, Frost says: "There are fewer leisure travellers flying during this period whereas business travellers fly throughout the year."

There are fewer leisure travellers flying during this period whereas business travellers fly throughout the year.

SAA partners with Brazil carrier

SAA has entered a new codeshare agreement with its Brazilian Star Alliance partner, Avianca Brasil, offering customers access to further destinations into Brazil.

Through the agreement, SAA customers are now able to travel on selected Avianca Brasil flights under the "SA" code, connecting passengers from São Paulo's international airport to Brasília, Cuiabá, Curitiba, Florianópolis, Fortaleza, Goiânia, Juazeiro do Norte, Maceió, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador.

SAA operates 10 weekly frequencies between Johannesburg and São Paulo.

In turn, Avianca Brasil customers can now travel on the "O6" Avianca Brasil code from South America to Johannesburg.



Air Mauritius and Emirates sign partnership

ANEW partnership between Air Mauritius and Emirates Airline allows each airline's loyalty programme members to earn and redeem miles on both carriers.

Air Mauritius's Kestrelflyer members can now earn miles when flying with Emirates and benefit from economy and business class award tickets on Emirates operated flights.

Kestrel Gold members have access to the Emirates Business Class Lounge in Dubai when travelling with an Air Mauritius ticket number on Emirates operated flights with Air

Mauritius flight numbers, on the Mauritius-Dubai-Mauritius sectors. Kestrel Gold members also have access to the lounge when flying on Emirates operated flights beyond Dubai with either an Air Mauritius flight number or an Emirates flight number, provided the travel is in conjunction with the Mauritius-Dubai-Mauritius sectors.

Kestrelflyer members are eligible to earn varying numbers of miles when travelling on Emirates flights in certain booking classes. Some flights are not eligible to earn Kestrelflyer miles.

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RwandAir eyes Durban route

RWANDAIR is the latest airline to announce plans to launch flights to Durban in the near future. The airline, which expects to take delivery of its first wide-body aircraft – an A330-220 – by September, plans to offer connections via Kigali to Mumbai. “It is anticipated that the A330 will service our Mumbai route, which will be launched later this year. Due to the demand and historical links between the sub-continent and KwaZulu Natal – more specifically Durban and the surroundings – we are exploring the possibility of a scheduled flight departing from Durban. This is still in negotiations and therefore we do not have a definite date yet,” **Thembela Dladla**, RwandAir country manager for South Africa, said. By December 2016, the airline will take delivery of a second Airbus, the A330-300.

Ugandan hotel gets R124m upgrade

THE first phase of Uganda’s Kampala Serena Hotel extension which began on March 1 will be completed in phases over the next 12 months.

The upgrade includes the partial refurbishment and alterations of the hotel’s meeting rooms, including the creation of an executive lounge and additional smaller meeting rooms; upgrading the facilities at the Pearl of Africa restaurant; and construction of 36 additional guest rooms and a new state suite. Energy efficiency upgrades have also been installed to reduce the carbon footprint.

“Since the last major upgrade in 2006, management implemented capital expenditure on an ongoing basis to offer a level of product and service to meet customer expectations and to ensure that it continues to differentiate the Serena brand from competition while retaining its leadership

position in the industry,” Serena said in a statement.

According to management, disruption as a result of the upgrade will be managed efficiently and sensitively to ensure that the product and service meet guests’ comfort and expectations during their stay.

The renovations were made possible by a US\$8m (R124m) loan facility in partnership with Proparco.

The property, previously named Nile Hotel International Conference Centre, was taken over by Serena Hotels in February 2004, with an 85-room inventory. Following initial refurbishment and upgrades costing US\$30,5m (R476m), the property is a five-star facility with 152 rooms; various dining venues; the Maisha Spa and Gymnasium; meetings and conference venues (eight meeting rooms accommodating up to 1 000 guests and banqueting services for up to 1 500 guests); and an extensive swimming pool area.

Beware ‘misleading’ Indian e-tourist visa sites

TRAVELLERS are unwittingly paying for Indian e-tourist visas, which are free for SA passport holders, through visa service websites charging a fee for applications.

The e-tourist visa offered by India to certain countries was extended to South Africa in February. Applications for the e-tourist visa can be done free on the official website of the Indian Government, indianvisaonline.gov.in.

However, several visa service websites with generic names – such as e-touristvisaindia.com – have travellers confused and applying through these websites thinking it is the official government site. Travellers are then required to pay a non-refundable service fee of US\$127 (R1 992) for the application.

Valen Govender, country manager of visa service company, BLS International, which processes Indian visas for South Africans, said there were several misleading websites charging a fee for the Indian e-tourist visa and that many applicants were falling victim to it.

At a recent roadshow held in conjunction with TravelVision, India Tourism assistant director, **Shri I.R.V. Rao**, warned travel agents about these websites, advising agents to familiarise themselves and their clients with the official government website.

Annemarie Lexow, sales and marketing manager of TravelVision, adds: “If you are not 100% sure that the website is legitimate, then contact the consulate to confirm.”



PHOTO: TARYN NIGHTINGALE

Ethiopian celebrates 70 years

Ethiopian Airlines celebrated 70 years in the industry at a workshop held at the Radisson Blu Hotel Sandton. The airline’s holiday division, Ethiopian Holidays, launched its latest product, *Run Wild Ethiopia*, a

four-day race-week package highlighting the Ethiotrail trail race held during August in Abijatta-Shalla Lakes National Park. Pictured here (from left) are: travel consultant **Rita Palana K.** of Inter Travel cc;

customer relations manager **Gloria Springett** and travel consultant **Samiya Khalpe**, both of XL Turbo Travel; and regional manager Southern Africa of Ethiopian Airlines, **Abel Alemu**.

Namibia scraps business visas

NAMIBIA has scrapped its business visa requirement for South African passport holders, which is expected to revive corporate travel to the country.

Business travel took a knock earlier this year after the Namibian government started clamping down on visitors who required a business visa, actively interviewing travellers entering the country. At the same time, government introduced a 'conference and meetings' visa.

Both visa requirements have now fallen away. Travellers entering Namibia for business purposes were now exempt from visas, the Namibian

Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration told *Travel Buyer*.

Namibia Tourism's area manager for Cape Town, **Cristina Cicognani**, says that after recognising the requirements were creating unnecessary complexities, the Namibian authorities reacted

quickly to do away with them. She adds that a work visa is still required for persons travelling to Namibia to work within the country.

Industry authorities are hopeful that this decision will restore the number of corporate travellers

headed to Namibia, after corporate travel took a knock as a result of the meetings and conference visa requirement. **Michéll Fourie**, sales and

marketing manager of Air Namibia for South Africa, says the airline received numerous calls and cancellations from clients who had purchased air tickets but had their visas declined.

Sometimes clients just want to get into a country, have a meeting and be out the same day, agrees **Edward Bongos Mtuyedwa**, senior corporate travel consultant of Executrav. "This new development will definitely make a huge difference and can only have a positive effect on business relations with Namibia," he adds.

"There was a drop in business to Namibia," says **Fiona Treu**, managing member of Harvey World Travel Boksburg. "We had corporates that still needed to travel and therefore had to apply for the conference and meetings visa, but new business deals were placed on hold."

This new development will definitely make a huge difference and can only have a positive effect on business relations with Namibia.

Big hotel brand enters Durban

REZIDOR, part of the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, is set to open its first property in Durban in 2019.

The 207-room Radisson Blu Hotel Durban Umhlanga will be designed as an urban resort within Oceans Umhlanga, a mixed-use complex that will include luxury apartments and a shopping mall.

The hotel will feature Radisson Blu signature services, such as free Internet; a restaurant offering all-day dining; a lobby bar and coffee shop; rooftop outdoor bar and terrace; and business lounge; a spa and gym; and outdoor swimming pool.

The meeting and events area will cover 1 200sqm.



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Emirates opens new lounge in Cape Town

EMIRATES has opened a new premium lounge at Cape Town International Airport, for first- and business-class customers. It represents a US\$2,89m (R45,4m) investment by the airline.

Skywards Platinum and Gold members will also receive complimentary access to the lounge, which can accommodate 123 people and is in the international departures corridor next to Emirates' preferred boarding

point at Gate A3.

Customers will have access to a fully equipped business centre with touch-screen workstations, complimentary WiFi and a dedicated lift to access the upper level of the lounge, which offers a quiet seating area, main dining room, second TV area, main restroom with showers, and a prayer room.

The airline expects to welcome approximately 65 to 70 premium customers on

a daily basis, said Emirates divisional senior vp of airport services, **Mohammed Mattar**.

In addition to Cape Town and the six lounges at its hub, Dubai International Airport, Emirates also has dedicated lounges worldwide.

Emirates currently operates two daily flights between Cape Town and Dubai with its Boeing 777 aircraft. The airline will launch a third daily service between the two cities from July 4.

Lufthansa launches FRA-CPT service

BOOKINGS have opened for Lufthansa's new thrice-weekly seasonal service between Frankfurt and Cape Town, which takes off on December 2.

Making the announcement in Cape Town on May 27, **André Schulz**, Lufthansa's gm for Southern Africa, said the airline was hoping to eventually extend the service year-round. The airline was confident it would be able to grow the outbound market, with Frankfurt being a major connecting hub in Europe to more than 200 destinations worldwide, said **Tal Muscal**, head of Lufthansa Group Communications. He said the outbound service would be competitively priced.

The FRA-CPT route will be served with a newly retrofitted A340-300 with 279 seats, offering 30 seats in the new business class, 28 seats in the new premium economy and 221 seats in economy. Flight LH576 will leave FRA at 22h10 to arrive in CPT at 11h00 the following morning. Flights from CPT will depart at 18h30 and arrive at 05h30 in FRA, well timed for onward connections on the entire Lufthansa route network.

Premier announces plans for three new properties

PREMIER Hotels and Resorts has announced plans for further expansion in South Africa, with three new properties in the next five years.

The three hotels are planned for the areas of Umhlanga, Fourways and Sandton. A site has already been acquired for the Umhlanga property and construction is expected to begin early 2017, said **Samuel Nassimov**, md of Premier

Hotels and Resorts.

"We would also like to have six or seven Express Inns throughout secondary cities like Bloemfontein, Uppington or Polokwane," said Nassimov.

Details of Premier's rebranding were also revealed at the gala dinner. Each of the sub-brands – Splendid Inn, Express Inn, Premier Resort and East London International Convention Centre – were rebranded with a different colour to represent the

different market segmentation. Premier's Pinetown, Port Edward and King David hotels will all be rebranded under the Splendid Inn brand.

"We would like to sub-brand to get the fair share of the market because right now we offer full-service, three- and four-star hotels," said Nassimov. He explained that the idea behind the sub-brands is to provide accommodation that is not necessarily high-end but still full-service.

Fly Blue Crane expands regionally

SOUTH Africa's newest airline, Fly Blue Crane, is rapidly expanding regionally. The airline has been granted 14 frequencies from Johannesburg to Maputo, Mozambique and 14 from Johannesburg to Manzini, Swaziland, says ceo, **Siza Mzimela**.

She says South Africa's International Air Services Council has given its approval for the two routes and a launch date will be announced in the next few weeks, once the airline receives its foreign operator permits from Mozambique and Swaziland.

She says the Maputo route will require careful planning because Fly Blue Crane has been restricted to 400 seats per week on that route.

The airline currently leases two 50-seat, single-class, Embraer Regional Jets (ERJ) 145s from Johannesburg-based Solenta Aviation and is currently in discussion with the leasing firm for two more ERJ-145s for use on the new routes. It plans to upgrade to 90-seat aircraft next year in order to grow its routes, Mzimela says, but she declined to specify which aircraft type were being considered. ■



Celebrating Fly Blue Crane's first arrival in Windhoek are (from left): ceo **Siza Mzimela**; lead cabin attendant, **Sinethemba Noyile**; chief pilot, **Captain Chris Smit** and coo **Theunis Potgieter**.

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Staying one step ahead

As the deputy director: logistical services for the National Department of Public Works, **Gideon Modutle** has seen a major shift in mindset when it comes to public sector travel. **Sue van Winsen** spoke to him on the eve of his promotion to find out more about his progressive and collaborative approach to managing travel.

July 1 will mark the end of an important era for **Gideon Modutle**, but the beginning of an exciting new adventure as he steps into his new role as the director: logistical services for the Gauteng Provincial Department of Infrastructure Development. For the past nine years, he has worked at the National Department of Public Works (NDPW) in Pretoria, and during his tenure, has overseen a number of projects from the introduction of new booking systems, to new processes and policies.



Gideon Modutle, deputy director: logistical services, NDPW

PHOTO: SHANNON VAN ZYL

A foundation in logistics

Born in Kimberley, Modutle moved to Bloemfontein to attend university, where he completed a diploma in commercial administration and a degree in office management and technology. He then worked in banking before moving into the public sector, initially taking on accounting roles which led to him eventually being introduced to the travel services function.

"In 2006, I was promoted to senior state accountant at the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, and this was when my foundation and love of travel really started," says Modutle. "It sparked my interest as I was able to take part in every stage of the travel process, from supporting travellers to managing the in-house agencies."

According to Modutle, it also tied in perfectly with his background in logistics. "Travel is all about planning, co-ordinating,

arranging and facilitating projects – this is essentially what project management and logistics are all about," explains Modutle.

In 2007, he was able to put these newfound skills to the test, as he was promoted to the NDPW and became involved in a number of extremely significant projects. For example, he was one of only nine project managers responsible for former President, Nelson Mandela's funeral. "There will never be another event like that in our lifetime and it's something that I will remember forever," he says.

New systems and processes

At the NDPW, travel was just one aspect of his portfolio, as he was responsible for all logistics and office support services. Due to the nature and scope of the NDPW's projects, which involves buying,

building and maintaining physical assets for other departments in government, as well as the South African public, the profile of the department's travellers includes senior management and project managers. Domestic travel accounts for 95% of spend and international travel just 5%.

With the nationwide increasing focus on cutting costs, the automation of the department's booking systems was a key priority for Modutle. From July 1, the NDPW will move across from its old paperwork-heavy system, to Travellinck, who will provide a self-booking platform for travel bookers, secretaries and PAs to process all bookings online.

Treasury's new measures

Modutle explains that the automation of the department's travel booking could not have come at a better time, especially in light of the National Treasury's new travel policy framework. He was involved in the formulation of the framework, which, he says, is playing a major role in the evolution of public-sector travel.

"When I initially started working in the travel space, there was no interest in reporting, expenditure analysis or general patterns. Then, as the years went by and austerity came about, suddenly everyone noticed the travel item line in the financial statement. We started to dig deeper and pull out travel patterns and reports. This has resulted in a great deal of change in terms of how travel is managed and budgeted for, so that we

can use the scarce resources we have to optimally and effectively still achieve the same goals," he explains.

In addition, the framework has made it mandatory for the cheapest mode of travel to be procured, he says, and therefore between three and six comparative quotations are required on all service types.

Modutle adds that Treasury's new measures have come with a number of requirements with regard to travel reporting. "Also, the policy has a number of restrictions and if these are not met, supporting evidential documentation must be provided. With Travellinck, we are able to bring supporting documentation online, create template forms and store everything on the central hub," he says.

Future plans

In his new role, Modutle is looking forward to helping the department to implement the National Treasury's new framework as painlessly as possible, while at the same time investigating the introduction of technology to ease up some of the administrative burden.

"I'm also looking forward to continuing to support National Treasury with the next phase of the project while at the same time supporting the service providers, particularly the smaller businesses who have felt marginalised in this process and need our support and continuous communication and engagement," he adds.

Lessons learned

- Travel experience and knowledge is very important in order to be successful in this field.
- Accept that sometimes the best planned travel itineraries may go wrong, but be equally prepared to offer a solution.
- Working under pressure and stressful situations is a precondition to accepting the job.
- Much like life in general, you will never please everyone, however always be positive, straightforward and consistent in your approach.
- You need an extremely high level of integrity and honesty; always remember that not everyone has your best intentions at heart.
- Be a master communicator.
- You need to be able to engage officials and employees at all levels.
- Travel is made up a long chain which requires perfect synchronicity, so you need to be an excellent team player. ■

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The travel policy of the future – what will it look like?

The growing emphasis on improving travellers' experience while at the same time keeping down costs, has resulted in some major changes in corporate travel policy. **Dorine Reinstein** investigates.

The balancing act between savings and service has started to shift with an increased focus on the travel experience. This is according to *The Evolution of Travel Policy: A Global View on the Future*, a recent research paper released by ACTE and American Express Global Business Travel (GBT).

However, corporate travel managers believe that this increased emphasis on the traveller does not necessarily have to come at the expense of savings. Rather, corporate travel managers expect that better traveller service will encourage savings. In fact, three-quarters of respondents in the study said that traveller service improvements could lead to savings. "It's not an either/or situation – it's more like a win/win," the paper states.

Ben Langner, md Carlson Wagonlit Travel South Africa, says locally, both savings and traveller experience remain important aspects of the travel policy. "Corporate clients want great service, however cost considerations are as strong as ever, given the challenging operating environment that most businesses in South Africa face at the moment."

Finding a balance

Langner agrees with the report that a well-considered travel policy that takes into account travellers' needs and journey experience will lead to greater compliance, as the motivations for non-compliance are then largely removed. "Travel policies should be drafted with great care to balance the needs of the

organisation with those of the traveller."

He says travel policies should take into account what the traveller has to endure during the journey. "For example, if it involves crossing many time zones, it would assist the traveller with combating fatigue and jet lag if they were to arrive a day before a demanding business commitment, especially if the journey is undertaken in economy class and involves multiple flights."

Kim Parker, head of business development for Wings Travel, Corporate, Sub-Saharan Africa, says increased education on travel policies, better use of technology to capture data generated outside the corporate system and partnerships with suppliers, are all ways a TMC can help travel programmes better manage traveller behaviour.

She says rogue travellers can be a great drain on the company's resources and that improving service can address this problem. "If travellers can have their needs satisfied at a lower rate, the incentive to move beyond the guidelines is diminished. Companies therefore consider an improved travel experience an important component of the TMC's service."

According to Parker, business travellers identified travel convenience – minimal layovers, convenient flight times and hotel locations – as the top priorities they would like to see their TMC improve to make their business travel experience a better one.

Michelle Jolley, national marketing manager at Corporate Traveller South Africa, says the little value-adds can make a big difference, such as making sure you have booked the seat

that the traveller requested, or allowing for a chauffeur-driven car.

She says, in the past, a lot of the initiatives and special offers would only be of benefit to the company and not to the traveller. "We have tried to find ways to balance this: get good rates for the company, while ensuring that the traveller is also receiving certain perks that will make his or her trip more comfortable."

Going high tech

What steps will corporate travel managers need to take to improve traveller service? Mobile bookings and pre-trip messaging feature high on the agenda as some of the initiatives that are already being implemented, according to the study. Giving travellers up-to-date information before, during and after they travel also appears to be an attractive way to boost service.

Corporate travel managers also seem intrigued by the potential of apps to improve the travel experience. Over a third (35%) of respondents have plans to introduce apps in the near future. However, as travel managers approach the travel policy in the future, what is certain is that technology will play a big role to make the traveller's life easier.

Langner foresees mobile technology becoming increasingly sophisticated and allowing more immediate, comprehensive, location-related and relevant information to be available on-the-go. "This would also simplify management of changes and communication while travelling."

He says clear communication of a travel policy to all relevant stakeholders, whether through technology or otherwise, always leads to improved compliance. "We have many clients who have, with our assistance and management tools, made the



Michelle Jolley, national marketing manager, Corporate Traveller South Africa

effort to do so and the outcomes in terms of achieving their policy objectives are great."

Less flexibility

Although the travel policy will not necessarily become stricter, it is also unlikely to become more flexible. According to the research paper, policy has remained largely stable. Where there was movement, travel managers reported a tendency to reduce flexibility.

Says Langner: "Provided the policy is well considered, comprehensive and fair to all parties – and clearly communicated to all concerned – it should be strictly enforced to ensure that the objectives of the policy are achieved."

"Travel policy is becoming increasingly less complex, which has the effect of making it less flexible," says **Frank Palapies**, coo, Africa & Middle East, Wings Travel Management. He says, for example, that in the past, senior management would be allowed to fly business class on certain routings and not on others. Now, because costs have to be cut to a minimum, the company might



say that nobody is allowed to fly business class, and everybody has to stay in three-star hotels.

One area where policies have become more flexible is where cost savings can be realised, through advance booking practice. Says Palapies: "By booking flights 14 days in advance, for example, business travellers can have a better chance of securing the best fares, which translate into substantial savings over the course of a financial year."

Duty of care

Despite the focus on service, it should be mentioned that the main consideration for today's travellers is safety and security and duty of care, says Parker.

She says, as travel often occurs in high-risk areas, constant updates sent to the traveller are often essential, as are updates when there has been a delay, to whoever is expecting a person to be at a specific place at a specific time.

MaryAnn Harvey, vp, global marketing communications, Wings Travel Management, agrees that duty of care is increasingly becoming a critical priority for all businesses. She says TMCs must be prepared to innovate by providing new technology tools to give up-to-the-minute information on the position of any traveller.

"The way that technology is now able to provide in-depth and real-time data is invaluable in terms of assessing risks and directing a course of action. Travel logistics companies that

are serious about providing a consultative and partnered service to their clients cannot ignore the importance of the use of technology in providing a comprehensive duty-of-care programme," she says.

For the travel buyer, it is necessary to calculate what is really useful for the corporation, according to Parker, because the more sophisticated the technology becomes, the more you pay for it.

The sharing economy

The rise of the sharing economy is one of the biggest stories in travel, but corporate travel managers only show moderate interest in ground transportation sharing economy options.

According to the research paper, just over one in 10 (13%) respondents have made provision for sharing economy transport options in policy. A further 13% are planning to implement it in the next one to two years. One third (33%) are talking about introducing policy – but a larger proportion, some 39%, say sharing economy options for ground transportation are not even on their agenda. There is even less enthusiasm for accommodation sharing economy options, with over

half (56%) of corporate managers ruling this out altogether.

However, **Alastair Dickenson**, client business manager, business development for Wings Travel Management, says he has seen the use of serviced apartments becoming part of travel policy. "This is especially the case for



Frank Palapies, coo for Africa and Middle East, Wings Travel Management

employees being placed at 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 was finalised. Those placed on projects for three months might spend the whole time in a serviced apartment. They tend to be more spacious and homely for the traveller, and more cost-effective for the corporate, compared with hotels."

Langner argues that although corporate clients are definitely interested in the cost-saving opportunities that the accommodation sharing economy may bring, at the same time there is reticence due to safety and security concerns when it comes to accommodation arrangements.

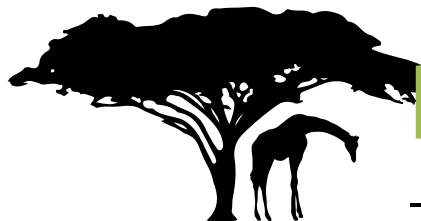
He says he has seen more interest in sharing transport options. "Many clients are using Uber frequently in those cities where it's available and this now seems quite an acceptable and satisfactory option, in addition to more traditional modes of transportation, such as taxis or buses."

The latest travel policy trends

The Evolution of Travel Policy: A Global View on the Future, a recent research paper released by ACTE and American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) has shown some notable trends in terms of the evolution of travel policies.

- Over the next one to two years, the substantial majority of respondents (84%) believe achieving savings will be a question of demand management and ensuring compliance.
- Policy remains a key lever for savings; 24% of corporate travel managers surveyed expect policy around advance purchase requirements to become less flexible and 19% anticipate tightening of policy on the use of alternative booking channels.
- According to 75% of survey respondents, improvements to traveller service can lead to savings based on changes in traveller behaviour.
- 45% say they have not received any requests from their travellers to include sharing economy options in policy.
- 72% believe they have more work to do to achieve their desired compliance level. A further 12% believe they have a lot more work to do to reach their goal.
- 55% educate travellers about their employer's obligations to them under duty-of-care guidelines and regulations.
- 47% have third-party specialists to educate travellers about higher-risk destinations, and 27% have introduced new or additional training for these travellers.
- 20% have introduced new processes, like emergency SMS messaging systems, for in-trip communication. ■

Many clients are using Uber frequently in those cities where it's available and this now seems quite an acceptable and satisfactory option, in addition to more traditional modes of transportation, such as taxis or buses.



Bush vs Beach

– which works best?



Choosing the perfect conference destination can be tricky when faced with the variety of options offered by South Africa's bush and beach venues. **Liesl Venter** spoke to **Teena Douglas**, sales and marketing manager of Lagoon Beach Hotel, and **Rina Cilliers**, general manager, sales, marketing and reservations at Legend Hospitality Group, to find the best of both beach and bush.

TAM: What is it about bush/beach conferencing that makes it such a popular choice for corporates?

Rina Cilliers: When it comes to conferencing there are a lot of options corporates have to consider before choosing their venue. When they decide to look for a venue that is outside the city and offers other elements, they usually consider a bush venue. What makes a bush venue so popular is the fact that they not only have the chance to work in an environment that is stress reducing and has fresh air with beautiful landscapes, but also provides the platform to engage with co-workers in a relaxed social environment when going on safaris or attending a boma dinner under the stars. Although corporates still work hard during their conference at a bush venue, the fact that they are able to be close to nature – even if it is only for a short period of time – leaves them feeling more rejuvenated upon their return to the city.

Teena Douglas: The beach by its very nature is unique and invigorating. This is transferred to the conferencing environment. Conferencing near the beach undoubtedly encourages delegates to be more open to positive change and creativity.

TAM: Have you noticed any major trends that have changed the nature of bush/beach conferencing in the last year?

Rina Cilliers: Budgets definitely play a more prominent role with bush conferencing these days. Corporates would normally have stayed a couple of days and spread out the conference with a lot of leisure and teambuilding time in between sessions. Due to budgets being tighter, corporates

are now opting to shorten their stay and fit in shorter leisure time and teambuilding in between their conferencing sessions. It is also widely expected that a bush conferencing venue should have the same technology capabilities as those in a city venue, whereas it was not always the case in the past. It has thus become very important to ensure our venue has the necessary technology available, as well as a variety of activities and team-building options that fit a schedule that only allows minimal time.

Teena Douglas: No, trends do not affect the nature of beach conferencing. Corporates love trying out alternative options and/or platforms to host conferences. Some of our corporates host their conferences at our hotel all the time as they love it. Other corporates try an alternative experience every year. We therefore get our turn for the delegates to indulge in our beach location when they are ready for it.

TAM: What are some examples of interesting set-ups you've put together for your clients?

Rina Cilliers: Over the years we have created a wide variety of set-ups for our clients when conferencing in the bush. Some of these include dinner under the stars under our 100-year-old fig tree, colourful Moroccan-themed evenings in our amphitheatre, traditional African-themed evenings at our Pedi Cultural Village and our Shebeen has even been converted into a 'Martian landscape' for a function.

Teena Douglas: Clients enjoy incorporating the ocean and Table Mountain views into their events. They love hosting cocktail functions at our pool deck (adjacent to the beach) especially at sunset. We've had fire dancers entertaining our guests under the stars with the relaxing sounds of the ocean in the background. Our guests leave the hotel feeling relaxed, revived and excited to come back for more.

TAM: What are some of the add-on experiences you offer your clients?

Rina Cilliers: We offer a wide variety of add-on experiences at all of our properties. Legend Golf & Safari Resort is particularly popular amongst corporates and there we offer a wide range of activities, including scenic helicopter flights, a meal on the mountain experience, golf on two golf courses as well as the Extreme 19th hole, Big Five safaris, teambuilding activities, including the Bear Grylls Academy teambuilding, adventure activities, wildlife and culture tours and a variety of sports facilities.

Teena Douglas: We can host fish braais for delegates to enjoy while looking at the sunset to name one, but really anything is possible as long as it is safe and does not harm our natural habitat.

TAM: Do you have any plans in place for your property that will be of interest to the conferencing market?

Rina Cilliers: At Legend Golf & Safari Resort we continuously strive to improve our facilities, service delivery and offerings. In addition to our 20 breakaway rooms, conference rooms that can accommodate 150 to 500 people and all-in-one conference packages, we are currently working on more activities and experiences for the corporate and leisure markets that will be completed in the near future, such as more adventure activities and a drive-in theatre that will serve as a teambuilding experience.

Teena Douglas: We are constantly being innovative with what we serve from a food and beverage perspective. At the same time a lot of effort is made to create different themes for corporates conferencing at our venue to enjoy.

Which European destination is the best fit for your ski incentive?

When it comes to experiences offered by skiing destinations, what makes one different from the other? **Taryn Nightingale** consults the experts.

Different skiing destinations are defined by unique characteristics – information that you can use to match your clients with the right destinations.

Switzerland is the most expensive of the four European ski experiences, which makes it quite an exclusive destination. **Erica Barrett**, ceo of SkiDreams, describes the Swiss ski experience as chalet style and good hotel accommodation with a quiet Après-ski (social activities and entertainment that occur at ski resorts) offering. “Swiss resorts are often pricey and are viewed as more exclusive than other European ski destinations,” she says.

The ski experiences in Switzerland are characterised by the country’s history, proud culture and unique nature, says **Greg Taylor**, gm of Pure Skiing, adding that the country is great for romantic and somewhat quieter trips. Both Barrett and Taylor agree that the Swiss experience is best suited to people with expensive tastes and a high budget.

France is best known for its high altitudes and big mountains, says Taylor, commenting that although the experience is a good choice for families and caters to skiers of all levels, the high altitude can sometimes be tough on young kids. Barrett says that these slopes are well-groomed and suggests that

this experience would be ideal for families and smaller groups who prefer quieter evenings.

“Austria has it all in my opinion,” says Taylor. “Many people consider Austria to be the home of European skiing. It has a very authentic feel to its ski resorts, which exude great charm. Austria is known for its Après-ski and mountain huts scattered around the ski area. Many of the resorts in Austria are at a lower altitude than those in France or Switzerland,” Taylor says, adding that Austria also offers the best value for money.

Barrett says that the excellent ski schools and friendly locals make Austria a relaxed and popular ski destination. Groups, families and

single folk who enjoy good skiing and even better parties will be best suited to skiing in Austria, she says.

For social travellers who enjoy a good eating culture, Italy is ideal. Barrett describes the ski experience in Italy as relaxed, with a focus on food. She says Italian hospitality is that of people welcoming you as if you were family. “It is not uncommon to stop for an early lunch on the slopes and end up staying for three hours, enjoying wine, and endless food all served to you by the typical Italian Mamma in their private home,” she says. Although it lacks a little in the Après-ski department, Taylor says it is a good choice for foodies who like to stay out late partying at night.

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5 of the best Maputo add-ons

Steeped in history with influences of Portuguese, English and Dutch culture, the Mozambican capital of Maputo is a vibrant African city with much to do. **Liesl Venter** spoke to **Stephanie von Allmen**, gm of Dana Tours, to round up some of her top choices for add-on activities in the city.

1. City tour

A three-hour tour that can be done in the morning or the afternoon takes visitors to the real Maputo and includes most of the famous landmarks in the city, including the railway station that was designed by Eiffel. City tours also take visitors to the botanical gardens, the Museum of Natural History, the City Hall as well as the Central Market for some truly Mozambican shopping. According to Von Allmen, these tours can be adapted to meet the specific needs of a group of delegates and can include a seafood lunch.

2. Mafalala walking tour

"Mafalala is one of the cultural and political cradles of Mozambique," says Von Allmen. It is a suburb that encapsulates both the old and the new of Maputo, giving an insight into the history of the country. The



Maputo by night

PHOTO: JOSE CARLOS BARBO

tour explains local ethno-cultural differences while walking around the streets, alleys and markets. It is also where some of Mozambique's most famous political leaders, writers, musicians and sporting heroes hail from and is a real eye-opening experience. The tour can be undertaken in the day or the evening.

3. Macaneta day trip

Situated about 30km north of Maputo, this is an adventure to one of Mozambique's famous pristine beaches. Getting there

includes a 4x4 drive and crossing the Incomati River by local ferry. "Lazing on the beach or swimming in the warm Indian Ocean is a real treat," says Von Allmen. "A seafood lunch is served by one of the local restaurants, while there is also an option of booking a boat cruise up the Incomati River."

4. Pancho Guedes walking tour

This half-day walking tour gives visitors real insight into the life of

the famous Mozambican architect, sculptor and painter, **Pancho Guedes**. During the tour, one sees some of his unique murals and buildings, while it also includes a stop to see the building where he lived and worked.

5. Maputo Elephant Reserve

A 50 000-ha mosaic of lakes, floodplains, mangrove swamps, woodlands, forest, dunes and unspoilt beaches, the Maputo Elephant Reserve is a must-do activity when in Maputo. It is situated in 4x4 terrain and also involves a ferry crossing at Catembe. According to Von Allmen, the trip allows visitors to come close to some of Africa's magnificent animals such as elephant, crocodile, giraffe and hippo. "Lunch is served in a tranquil environment overlooking the lake, hopefully in the company of a pod of hippos."

Gala dinner inspiration

Renowned for its outstanding seafood, Maputo in Mozambique has some trendy venues available for gala dinners.

Zambi is known as one of Maputo's favourite restaurants and dinner is an experience of note. The restaurant can cater for various group sizes, from small to large, and has several set menu options to choose from.

For an experience steeped in history, the Polana Serena Hotel was built in 1922 along sweepingly splendid lines. This is truly Maputo's 'grande dame'. The palazzo-style hotel overlooks Maputo Bay and, with its rich history and

luxurious finishes, it is the ideal setting for any glitzy gala dinner. Recently restored, the hotel's majestic ballroom can cater for large groups of people while its 142 rooms are spacious, allowing for overnight accommodation. The hotel also boasts three restaurants including a fine-dining French-style experience.

If spectacular views are what you are after, Hotel Cardoso is situated atop a cliff and offers visitors a perspective unlike any other over the bay and historic port city of Maputo. Its Fiamma Restaurant designs menus for special occasions and serves international or Mozambican favourites, making it the ideal venue for a

gala dinner. For ocean views, the Radisson Blu Maputo is situated on the beachfront and has a variety of meeting and event space. Every effort is made to use local ingredients when developing menus for functions and events, allowing delegates to experience Mozambican flavours.

For larger events, the centrally situated, conference centre has become one of the most popular venues in Maputo. It can cater for up to 800 people in cocktail format or 600 for a buffet. The centre has a variety of spaces that can be transformed for dinner events, including tented marquees. The Southern Sun Maputo is renowned for its

seafood. The hotel recently underwent a renovation and is a luxurious venue for evening dinners. The hotel restaurant prides itself on capturing the essence of Mozambique's Portuguese heritage.

Another option is Girassol Indy Village, located close to the city centre and only a 10-minute drive from Maputo airport. Sophisticated and classically decorated, the beautiful gardens make it a popular venue. The hotel has one restaurant and three bars and a fully fitted conference centre. Its facilities can easily cater for up to 1 000 delegates with a highly qualified and experienced team on hand to assist with any requirements.

5 creative and simple ways for conference delegates to stay healthy

MICE travel can be taxing and take a serious toll on delegates' health. **Hayley Walls**, marketing manager of Thompsons Travel, gives her top tips to stay healthy while attending a conference.

1. Find trendy breakfast hangouts near your hotel

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Heard that one before? Well, that's because there's a lot of truth to it. Starting your day healthy not only keeps you fuller, but sets the tone for healthy conference eating! You'll be less tempted to reach out for those doughnuts and sweets on the conference table.

You don't have to stick to the same old hotel breakfast every morning. Do some research and find the trendiest breakfast establishments near the hotel or the conference centre. You'll be able to mix with the locals, get a sense of your destination and stay healthy all at the same time.

3. Find ways to sleep

Conferences can be a hive of activity with dinner parties and cocktail evenings almost every night. Don't stay out too late and try to get enough bed rest. The truth is that you'll need your bed rest during a busy conference to help you keep your stamina up

and prevent you from getting sick. Don't want to miss the night parties? Try a midday nap or a mid-morning, or a mid-afternoon nap. Try to find some time during the day – even if it is just 40 winks – to relax and recharge.

4. Adhere to these crucial bar basics

At the end of a stressful day, hitting the bar with a few colleagues to let your hair down is very tempting. We should tell you that alcohol is not the best option, and that you should rather stick to water.

But, if you really want to give

into the temptation and get a drink, there are a few bar basics to keep in mind. Cocktails can be really attractive and tempting, but unfortunately they are full of sugar. So, rather steer clear of sugary cocktails and try a gin and tonic or a glass of wine instead.

2. Ditch the cab



PHOTO: DEPOSITPHOTOS

Does the idea of heading to the hotel gym at 5am give you the shivers? You don't have to suffer on the treadmill to stay active and healthy while away. Instead, why don't you just ditch the cab and walk to the convention centre in the morning? It's a great way to explore the area, get some exercise and jumpstart better oxygen flow. Endorphins are a

powerful thing and will keep you feeling energised for the rest of the day.

Starting to feel a bit low during the day? Skip the elevator or escalator and take the stairs instead. It's a great way to work some exercise into your day and, who knows, you might even set a new record on your Fitbit/Apple watch.

5. Fly healthy



Try to stay away from the fried foods at the airport. Instead, pack raw, unsalted nuts and fruits to take along. They're healthy and will keep you full for longer. Also drink plenty of water and stay away from the sugary sodas.

Sitting still on the plane is also not the healthiest of activities and there are some movements you can do to keep your blood flowing while in flight. See it as a chance to keep healthy and

provide entertainment for your fellow passengers.

Ankle rotations: Lift your feet off the floor and draw a circle with your toes, trying to get a full range of motion through your ankle. Repeat in the opposite direction.

Foot lifts: Alternate keeping your toes on the floor and lifting your heels while keeping your heels on the floor and lifting your toes.

Knee lifts: Sitting straight up,

keep your knee bent and lift your thigh so that you're flexing at the hip. Alternate legs.

Toe curls: Curl your toes and release. Also try pressing your toes down against the floor or just wiggling them inside your shoes.

As you can see, there are plenty of creative ways to keep healthy during your next trip. Whatever you do: don't let health take the backseat to the demand of conference travel. ■

Cruising just got bigger and better

The largest ship in the world is on everybody's lips. **Debbie Badham** was on board *Harmony of the Seas* as a guest of Cruises International, as she embarked on the pre-inaugural voyage from Southampton.

With a length of 362 metres, the *Harmony of the Seas* encompasses the combined innovation and class of her sister ships in the Royal Caribbean International fleet. While critics may question whether bigger is better, RCI execs are adamant that *Harmony* was designed to deliver the "wow factor" that guests are looking for and that her size was simply the enabler.

"We haven't designed these ships because we want them to be larger, we want them to be better,"

says **Richard Fain**, chairman and ceo of Royal Caribbean Cruises. In response to questions about whether the size of the ship might alienate certain travellers, he says that often people who travel on RCI's larger ships are surprised at the quality and richness of the experience.

The ultimate incentive

The "wow" factors that go hand in hand with the RCI brand and ships are a significant draw card

for incentive groups, says **Dalene Oroni**, group and incentives manager for Cruises International. "*Harmony* is sailing in the Med this year, which presents a great opportunity to sell this product to the corporate and incentive market. Most of my incentive groups prefer the Med due to more convenient flight times." The Med itinerary combined with the opportunity to sail on the biggest, newest and most innovative ship in the world will play a big part in getting incentive groups on board, Oroni says. "Not

to mention all the entertainment on offer – something different and magnificent for the group to experience every evening. They will never get bored."

The free conference facilities offered on board RCI ships are another advantage for corporates. "Free conference rooms and equipment are ideal for the company which would like to incorporate a conference day or two," says Oroni. "Incentive groups can also buy out restaurants for the group and make it their own for the evening."



PHOTO: RCI

#OnboardHarmony

The ship features Voom, the fastest Internet at sea, a result of a satellite that follows *Harmony* throughout her voyage. The ship's impressive connectivity is a significant advantage, given that many of today's travellers share their experiences over social media. This is also extremely convenient considering just how much there is to experience and post about on board *Harmony*. These are just a few examples:

The Ultimate Abyss

Arguably the most popular attraction on board *Harmony*, the Ultimate Abyss is a 10-storey slide that sits 45,72 metres above sea level, making it taller than Buckingham Palace.

Theatre productions

A major part of *Harmony's* proposition is her impressive line-up of entertainment. The

biggest draw card in the line-up is a production of *Grease*. Also not to be missed is the ship's Studio B Ice Rink, which features its own unique ice show, *1887*.

Central Park

It's oddly thrilling to feel as if you are wandering through streets outdoors when in reality you are sailing in the middle of the ocean. With its quaint combination of park benches, plant life and outdoor dining areas, Central Park offers its own unique buzz. From cafés to speciality restaurants and boutique brand stores like Bvlgari, there is much for travellers to explore.

Speciality dining

Harmony has eight different speciality restaurants, each designed to deliver a unique dining experience. Jamie's Italian is a popular option. Another dining attraction is the ship's Wonderland, which bases its design and menu on

the concept of the 'fantastical', from menus that are blank until 'painted to life', to meals that are deliberately constructed to look like elements other than food, for example a garden patch.

Bionic and Rising Tide Bars

The Bionic Bar will have passengers queuing up to be served drinks while they watch the robotic bar tenders at work. Directly alongside is the Rising Tide Bar, which welcomes patrons 'aboard' to enjoy a drink or two as it travels up and down between different deck levels.

The Perfect Storm

A trio of multi-storey water slides, The Perfect Storm will take guests on a swirling adventure ride between decks. One slide features a champagne bowl that whirls guests around as they approach the end of the ride. ■



Central Park

PHOTO: RCI



Acts of terrorism in destinations that were previously regarded as safe have forced corporates to reconsider their travel risk management plans. **Sue van Winsen** attended a recent Abta Corporate Travel Forum which examined the threats that travellers face.

Many corporate travel managers name terrorism as their main concern when it comes to the safety of their travellers, but there are many other threats that should also be factored into travel risk management plans.

This was the view of **Nick Piper**, director of Signal Risk and co-founder of My Travel Risk, who spoke at a recent Abta Corporate Travel Forum in Johannesburg. "There is no doubt that there has been a significant increase in terrorist incidents, in fact there have been about 10 times more terrorism-related fatalities this year than in 2000, however the concern is limited to a select group of countries," he said.

He added that the rise in "lone wolf" incidents, where self-radicalisation occurred in countries where terrorist groups did not have an operational presence, was a growing global threat. He cited the example of the hostage situation that took place in Australia in the Lindt Café in Sydney's financial district, which was an example of a terrorist acting alone.

The most common threat

Rather than terrorism, the most common security threat that corporate travellers face

is crime. Piper said travel security specialists spent the bulk of their time looking at statistics, anecdotal evidence and "victimisation" surveys to identify crime trends.

"Currently, we've noted an increasing propensity for petty incidents to turn violent and the chances of this are highest when the victim resists the criminal. We have also seen an increase in 'snatch and grab' incidents, especially in countries where motorcycles are a popular means of transport," he said. This is because criminals can approach the victim on the street by motorcycle and make a speedy getaway after the crime.

Other types of threats

Civil unrest, including demonstrations, protests and strikes, are also a threat, and while they are common, they also tend to be low impact. "There are however exceptions to this," said Piper. "There are countries that are particularly prone to violent protests but often these are easy to avoid." He added that civil rest could also be a catalyst for other security concerns, such as the ongoing civil war in Syria, which started as a series of anti-government protests.

Trends in this regard include the blockading of highways to

highlight particular causes, as this tends to get a great deal of media attention. This is fairly common in South Africa, with the N2 in Cape Town and the Golden Highway in Johannesburg being popular choices. "The other trend is Uber angst, where taxi drivers protest the service – and in Kenya, Egypt and France, these have become violent," he said.

Kidnapping is another concern, but Piper points out that very few corporates truly understand the risk. "The majority of cases involve gang members kidnapping other gang members, but there are also cases of kidnapping for political concessions, when someone is abducted and released on condition that someone else is released. Then there are cases where the motivation is revenue and they demand a ransom," said Piper. Areas where kidnapping poses the greatest threat include parts of South America (but this is driven by the drug war), Africa and Asia, where kidnappings are linked to militant groups.

An emerging trend with regard to abductions, is what Piper referred to as "express kidnappings" where people are kidnapped and taken to cash machines to draw money, after which their valuables are stolen and they are left stranded.

"There are three other threats: natural hazards, road accidents

and medical," said Piper. "These are assessed on frequency, how destructive their effects are and their impact. For example, Japan can handle an earthquake better than Haiti."

What travel managers need to know

Corporate travel managers need a better understanding when it comes to the key risks travellers face. Piper said this was not as simple as it might seem. "For example, travel managers need to consider that risk is area-specific, not country-specific. There may be a higher kidnapping risk in Nigeria, but only in certain parts – most only exhibit a medium-risk of kidnapping so it's important to take differentiation into account."

Risk is also specific to the profile of travellers and their itinerary, as well as specific situations – for example, developments in a country could increase the risk of mass protests, said Piper.

What this means for travel co-ordinators, concluded Piper, is that they need to 1) understand the baseline risks, 2) find out how these might change, and 3) monitor for changes when travellers are in the destination.

What went horribly wrong & what we learned from it

A recent Abta Corporate Travel Forum included a session where travel managers presented real case studies on crisis situations, and how they were managed. Here are three examples of what went horribly wrong and what the travel managers did to turn the situation around.

Case study 1: A mining accident

What happened

When an essential mining machine broke down in Namibia, a field service technician was sent to service the machine on site. The plan had been set into motion: he would land late afternoon and check in to the hotel, rest, and the next morning go to the mine and service the machine deep underground. At noon the following day, the company received a phone call from the TMC to say that the hotel would be charging for a 'no show' as the technician did not arrive. The next few hours were spent unsuccessfully trying to reach the traveller. It was established that he did catch his flight, arrive in Namibia and pick up his rental car, but after that had completely vanished. Eventually, it was established that instead of going to the hotel from the airport, he went to the site and started trying to fix the machine at night. These machines have big brake blocks that need to be put in place during servicing, but the technician failed to do so and was killed by the machine.

What made it worse

It was also discovered that the company had no next-of-kin

details in the traveller's profile documents, which meant that it took two days to finally release the deceased's name. It was also established that the technician had been working very long hours in the week leading up to the trip.

Lessons learned

The human resources feed was updated and the responsible person has been tasked with ensuring that traveller profile data is updated on a monthly basis. The travel policy has also been updated to state that travellers arriving after a certain time of day cannot go on site or drive – instead they have to rest. Travellers have also been informed about why these rules are in place.

Case study 2: A lost passport on an incentive trip

What happened

At the end of an incentive trip in Istanbul, the group were at the airport and, just before check-in, a traveller started frantically unpacking their bags and suitcases and it was discovered that they had lost their passport as well as the passport of their 21-year-old son.

What made it worse

The South African embassy had moved from Istanbul to Ankara and they could not board any flight without a passport – neither back to South Africa nor to Ankara. They had to be driven 450km from one city to another, which not only increased costs but also the risk to the traveller on the road. Added to that, this happened

on a Friday, and a replacement passport could not be obtained over the weekend.

Lessons learned

The importance of travellers being registered on the embassy website was discovered, as this helps with the issuing of passports as it is easier to verify that the person is in the relevant country. The company hosting the incentive trip has a 24/7 travel risk centre, so travellers are informed and advised prior to travel addressing concerns, providing them with numbers to call if they encounter problems, and what to do if they lose their passport or get sick. Because of this, the company was able to arrange extra accommodation, transport to the embassy, transport to have photos taken and to the police station to give the statement and fingerprints, and back to the embassy and hotel. This would have cost the company approximately R96 000 had they not had adequate travel insurance cover and a thorough duty-of-care policy.

Case study 3: Cancelled flights and closed airports

What happened

The md of the company needed to travel from Johannesburg to Athens as the keynote speaker for a conference. It was crucial that he attended the conference to network with potential clients. The day before he was due to travel, the company received communication from international colleagues regarding a possible 24-hour

public-sector strike that could affect flights – this update did not come from the insurer. On April 6, the day he was due to travel, it was discovered that all flights had been cancelled, but it was essential that he was in Athens by 19h00 on April 7.

What made it worse

It was established that the possibility of a strike had been circulating in the media since March 28, but the information had not been relayed by the insurer. If this had been communicated, the travel department could have taken proactive, instead of reactive measures. In addition, there was no option of chartering a helicopter or aircraft, as all air traffic control had been stopped. The company's back-up vendors were unable to assist with viable options and took too long to revert.

Lesson learned

The travel department had to refer to a map to look for the closest country where a Schengen visa would be accepted and it was ascertained that Macedonia would be the best option. The md flew from South Africa, to Germany to Macedonia, where a driver collected him and drove him eight hours to Athens. He made it just in time to deliver his keynote address. A lesson that was learned was that it is important not to be completely reliant on any vendor. It is also important to administer daily news checks looking for any updates that could impact travellers or put them at risk. The company also workshopped various emergency scenarios in educational sessions with all relevant travel bookers and business travellers.

Trust your TMC for high-risk travel

TRAVELLERS heading to high-risk destinations and unpredictable emerging markets, particularly in the oil, gas and marine sectors, need to ensure they use the services of a trusted travel provider.

"Travel on its own can be fraught with unexpected delays because of bad weather or mechanical issues. But in today's world, as clients push the boundaries in search of elusive resources, their travellers are encountering major disruptions caused by natural disasters, terrorist acts, or political unrest, just to name a few," says **Frank Palapies**, coo, Africa and Middle East for Wings Travel Management. "Whatever it is, you want to know that the travel management company you use will be there for you."

Wings Travel Management says its expertise lies in navigating complex and challenging energy-related business travel, with its reach spanning North America, South America, UK/Europe, Africa and the Middle East, where it has fully owned and controlled operations in these regions.

"Most other travel management

companies do not own their own operations in high-risk markets such as Nigeria and Angola; they use partner agencies or franchisees. But the difference at Wings is that we own and manage all of our global operations," says Palapies

"This means that our clients not only benefit from consistent technology and servicing across our standardised global operational platform, but in times of emergency, our teams can access travel records, regardless of where or when the reservation was made, and provide support immediately."

Wings also operates its own global emergency centre, Wings24, and plans to launch a new mobile app tailored for travellers on the move, providing them with travel risk alerts specific to their trip, as well as real-time itinerary and flight status updates. In addition, Wings' business intelligence tool, goData, gives clients direct access to all their travel analytics and savings, as well as incident management and interactive traveller tracking functionality.

Four safety and security tips

ANYTHING can happen anywhere and at any time, says **Theresa Szejwallo**, md of The Travel Corporation (TTC) in South Africa. She provides her top four tips to take care when travelling.

1. Know how to contact the South African Embassy.

When an incident happens, you must contact the embassy or foreign mission so that they can establish your whereabouts and welfare. Knowing who to contact is also important in case your passport is stolen or lost. It's also worthwhile keeping a copy of your passport in your luggage.

2. Find out how to contact local authorities in case of an emergency.

Every country has its

equivalent to 911. Britain's equivalent is 999. In France, it's 112. In Belgium, it's 101 for the police and 112 for everything else.

3. Those phone numbers are only useful for working phones.

We know how expensive international roaming is, so try an alternative such as buying a local SIM card or renting a phone. But check with your service provider if your current phone can be unlocked to accommodate a local SIM.

4. Be vigilant when in public.

South Africans are naturally security conscious, so don't let this habit lapse when you're travelling. This applies to being on the lookout for unusual happenings and potential thieves. ■

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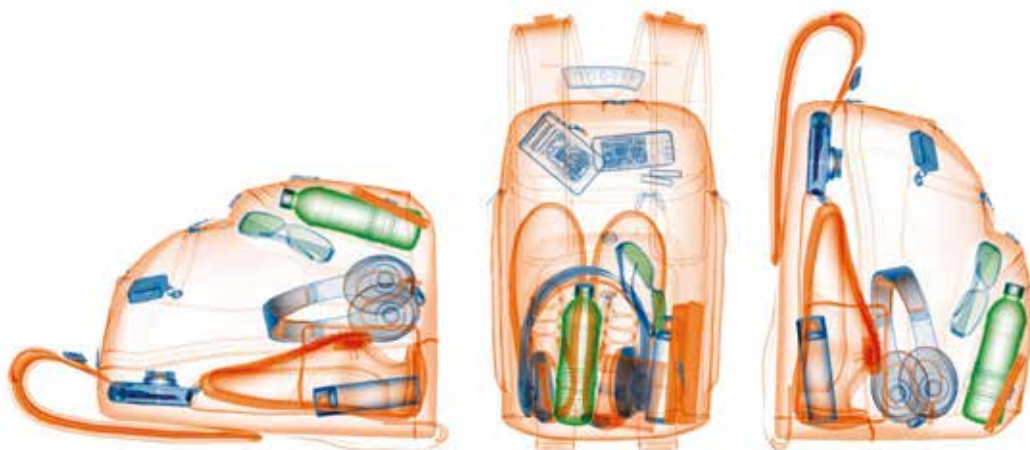
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Aviation security begs a global view

Local TMCs do not detect hesitancy in travelling to or via North African and Middle Eastern hubs, regions of the world associated with unrest, writes **Michelle Colman**.

With the Middle East being the site of much of the world's strife, one would expect travellers using the region's air hubs to be cautious.

But, to date, Middle Eastern hubs have been relatively safe. With the exception of Metrojet 9268, a chartered passenger flight operated by Russian airline Kogalymavia (branded as Metrojet), which disintegrated over the northern Sinai in October last year after take-off from Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, recent aviation security incidents have occurred in other parts of the globe. At the time of publishing, the cause of the downing of EgyptAir's flight MS804 in May, had yet to be ascertained.

Expansion surges ahead

Airports in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Qatar continue to revel in expansion of networks, frequencies and passengers. According to **Jean Martins**, country manager of the Tourism & Culture Authority

for Abu Dhabi (TCA Abu Dhabi) in Johannesburg, Abu Dhabi International Airport is consistently beating previous monthly records of passenger numbers, while national carrier Etihad continues its ambitious expansion programme, growing demand for travel to, and through, the region.

Shaun Lovett, head of business development of Wings Travel Management's Oil & Gas Division, sees no reluctance from clients to use Middle Eastern hubs. "Travel into the Middle East remains a growth area, either for direct flights or for connecting flights on to the Far East or Europe. Most of the regional airlines travelling between African countries and the Middle East travel hubs in Dubai or Qatar have increased the frequency of their routes to meet the increasing demand," he says.

While safety and security remain a primary concern for travellers and travel managers globally, Wings has not experienced specific or increased concern regarding the Middle East hubs, but rather for traveller safety and

tracking in general. "Airports and airlines globally have increased security measures to mitigate risks. Similarly, travel logistics companies have also increased their activity in providing additional services to businesses to ensure duty of care to their travellers," he says.

Sharmila Ragananan, spokesperson for Flight Centre, agrees: "Flight Centre has not detected any changes in passengers' willingness to travel through hubs in the Middle East and Gulf. Airlines and hubs servicing the regions are doing well despite the recent terror attacks."

Commitment to fighting terrorism

As Lovett indicates, safety and security today is probably best viewed in global terms, rather than regional, a point reflected

in a resolution adopted at IATA's 72nd AGM in Dublin at the beginning of June.

The resolution calls for airlines worldwide to work together with airports and other key stakeholders to counter the

Travel into the Middle East remains a growth area, either for direct flights or for connecting flights on to the Far East or Europe.

risk of terrorist threats and urges governments to commit all possible resources, particularly intelligence resources, to fight the use of aviation for terrorist acts.

IATA is working on initiatives that will allow airlines and airports

to deliver more streamlined safety systems, ensuring passengers spend less time at airports. With the Airports Council International (ACI), the association is evaluating the effectiveness of Smart Security screening technologies that facilitate the movement of passengers through security with minimal inconvenience, allocate resources based on risk, and cut down on queues and intrusive measures.

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Emerging African hubs provide more options for travellers

Travellers will benefit from airlines expanding their networks and developing their primary hubs. **Darise Foster** reports.

While experts agree that Johannesburg and Nairobi are the top hubs in Africa, emerging hubs are creating more seamless, convenient options for travellers visiting different parts of the world. Johannesburg, Cairo, Lagos, Nairobi and Addis Ababa are the top five hubs in Africa, according to Plane Talking md, **Linden Birns**.

"Johannesburg will remain significant to the African continent and Nairobi will always be a dominant player because of its geographic position but Durban is also growing in significance, with Qatar Airways and Turkish Airlines operating a direct service on this route," says Barsa ceo, **June Crawford**.

Proflight Zambia and Ethiopian Airlines also launched direct services to Durban recently. Ethiopian flies to 52 destinations across Africa, connecting through its hub in Addis Ababa.

"Addis has been our hub since our inception 70 years ago and we are the dominant carrier from that airport," says Ethiopian Airlines' regional manager for Southern Africa, **Abel Alemu**. "When a new terminal was built in 2005, it was done with consideration for the upcoming decade. In that time, Ethiopian Airlines has grown tremendously – especially in the past 10 years where we have seen almost 25% growth year on year in terms of passenger numbers, revenue and operating

profits," he says.

According to Alemu, 70% of Ethiopian Airlines' passengers transit through Addis Ababa. The airline currently carries seven million passengers annually, he says.

More focus on Cape Town

Ethiopian Airlines increased the number of direct flights between Addis Ababa and Cape Town from two to four flights a week on July 1. The airline joins British Airways, Turkish Airlines, Lufthansa, Thomas Cook Airlines and Kenya Airways in the list of airlines placing more focus Cape Town on their route network.

"Carriers are realising that travellers do not want to connect through Johannesburg, and are responding to that demand by introducing direct flights out of Cape Town," says Fly Blue Crane coo, **Theunis Potgieter**.

Fly Blue Crane will launch direct flights between Windhoek and Cape Town – its first regional route – later this year.

Wesgro, the official tourism, trade and investment promotion agency in the Western Cape, devised an initiative to create opportunities into Cape Town in partnership with Acsa and the City of Cape Town. According to Crawford, this strategy centres on creating sustainable routes with selected markets.

"This initiative has resulted in a Cape Town-Kenya route launching

in July, which creates significant access into a key hub in Africa," she says. This could be a great model for the rest of South Africa to use as a lesson in facilitating airlines into South Africa and opening new, key networks, Crawford adds.

Connecting in Mauritius

Alemu reveals that most of the traffic out of Africa is to India, China and the Gulf region. Because of the increasing traffic between China and Africa, Air Mauritius will launch flights to Guangzhou on July 12.

The airline offers more direct connections to the Far East than any other African carrier. "Mauritius is centralised between Africa and Australasia, offering travellers less flying time from South Africa to these destinations," says Air Mauritius regional manager for Southern Africa, **Carla da Silva**.

A flight to India, for example, is between five and six hours from Mauritius. A flight to Perth is seven hours, and Mauritius is just four hours away from South Africa.

"Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolan International Airport is a first-class airport that was totally revamped and overhauled recently with the objective of transiting and passing-through passengers enjoying an easier and more comfortable process," says Da Silva. For business travellers, the airport also offers an established business centre which includes high-speed Internet access.

Heathrow expansion will improve experience

While the debate over the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport continues to rage on, Heathrow Airport Holdings maintains that an additional runway and new terminal building will improve the overall passenger experience.

Liezl Gericke, country manager for Virgin Atlantic in South Africa, agrees, explaining that Heathrow is massively constrained with capacity so travellers will benefit from the additional capacity at the airport.

Should the runway expansion take place, it will also mean more slots for airlines to fly to Heathrow, which will give customers more choice, she says. "And more choices for travellers means more opportunity to ensure that Heathrow remains the airport of choice for transiting passengers," Gericke says.

She admits that the issue of funding remains contentious. "The debate is centred on who is going to pay for this expansion. Is it government, airport taxes? Where will the money come from?"

Nonetheless, Gericke says Heathrow is still the number-one airport of choice for South Africans as it connects two source markets in the form of South Africa and Britain. "The Johannesburg-London route is the most popular route on the entire Virgin Atlantic route network in terms of passenger numbers."

Plus, travellers know they can fly virtually anywhere in the world from Heathrow, she adds. Some 80 airlines fly into Heathrow Airport, serving 183 destinations in 82 countries.

Corporates enjoy flying through Heathrow as well, says Gericke, because it is a trusted hub with a long legacy.

Midfield terminal extends capacity by 11m

Germany's first midfield terminal is now operational at Munich Airport.

The new facility gives the airport 27 new gate positions where passengers can board aircraft directly without bus transportation. A satellite to Terminal 2, which is used by Lufthansa and its Star Alliance

partners, increases capacity by 11 million to 36 million passengers per year.

The satellite has no direct landside transportation links. Check in takes place in Terminal 2. Passengers then undergo passport screening and hand baggage checks before boarding the airport's own underground transport

system, which takes them to the satellite terminal in barely a minute.

The new terminal offers passengers a wide range of shopping and dining options in attractive and spacious areas flooded with natural light. Passengers also have five new Lufthansa lounges to choose from.

Plans for more commercial flights from Wonderboom

It's almost a year since Airlink commenced flights between Pretoria and Cape Town from Wonderboom Airport, giving residents in the capital and surrounds a way to get to the Mother City through an uncrowded airport, with reduced check-in times.

The airline commenced with an initial three return flights daily but reduced this to two. Comments ceo, **Rodger Foster**: "There have been some inhibitors such as the K97 off-ramp to the Platinum highway not being open, but these are all being addressed and, in due course, airport access will be quicker and easier and volume growth will accelerate."

The airline is keen to have the third flight reinstated as soon as passenger numbers dictate, "so as to be able to provide more optimal flight timings to the complex needs of our customers". "Airlink plans to increase frequency in the near

future without adding more capacity than the market can sustainably absorb," says Foster.

He says the flight attracts a blend of leisure and business travellers, which vary by the time of day, day of week and leisure seasonality. "Our flight times are aimed at all facets of the market."

Airlink hopes to introduce flights from Pretoria to Durban and Port Elizabeth in the future. These plans will be activated once the Pretoria-Cape Town service matures.

The airport is keen to encourage more carriers to use its facilities and a Council Resolution taken by the Tshwane municipality in 2012 gives it the green light to pursue service level agreements with airlines whose fleet and operations meet the technical limitations of its infrastructure.

One of those limitations is noise. A spokesman points out that at present, the airport uses



Roger Foster, ceo, Airlink

a noise limitation guideline to determine the number of scheduled flight movements that can be allowed within the operational hours of 06h00 to 22h00, to avoid negatively affecting the surrounding community. Although noise levels depend on aircraft type, it is fairly safe to assume that

some 60 scheduled flights a day (30 inbound and 30 outbound) could be handled with ease.

Passenger facilities at Wonderboom include under-cover car parking, security services, a modern departure hall, arrivals hall with an electronic carousel, baggage trolleys, restaurant, hotel, kiosks, vehicle hire companies, taxis, a tourism/information centre, air ticket sales offices, and a clinic for medical emergencies.

Recently opened at Wonderboom Airport is the Grey Sunbird Business Class lounge, operated in partnership with Airlink and SAA. Business-class passengers, SAA Voyager Lifetime Platinum, Platinum and Gold members can use the lounge with one guest.

The airport has made a submission to obtain international status. Once it is granted, provision will be made for international passengers. ■

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1. Austria

Pure Skiing. Seven-night St Johann packages from R18 165pp sharing. Rate includes return transfers, accommodation in a double room with breakfast daily, six-day ski pass and hire (boots, poles and skis), ski guiding, 10 days' Zurich Travel Insurance. Offer excludes flights, taxes, ski lessons and entertainment programme. Set travel dates January 7-14, 2017.

2. KZN

Travel with Options. Shark Fest scuba-diving package from R10 381pp sharing. Rate includes return airport transfers, six nights' accommodation with breakfast daily, 10 dives on the Aliwal Shoal, one baited shark dive, weight belt and weights, cylinder and air fill, protected area diving permit and transfers from the dive centre to launch site. Non-diving partner rate from R4 397. Itinerary: Arrive on Sunday, dive Monday to Friday and depart on Saturday. Rate excludes flights. Valid for travel until November 30.

3. North West

Dreams. Pay for three nights and stay for four from R2 955pp sharing. Offer includes four nights' accommodation at the Cabanas at Sun City in a standard family room with breakfast daily. Valid for South African residents only. Offer available midweek only (Sunday-Thursday). Valid for stays until August 31.

4. Western Cape

Aha. Cape Town winter school holiday package from R1 550 per room per night. Rate includes one night's accommodation at the Adderley Hotel in a luxury suite and three tickets to the aquarium at the V&A Waterfront per booking. Rate is for two adults sharing and one child on a rollaway bed. Minimum stay of two nights. Valid for travel until July 31.

5. Israel

El Al Israel Airlines. Jerusalem city break from R13 610pp sharing. Rate includes return flights from Johannesburg to Tel Aviv including

approximate taxes, four nights' accommodation at the Prima Royale Hotel or Grand Court Hotel, one free dinner and a booklet of discount vouchers. Available midweek only (Monday to Friday). Valid for travel until February 28.

6. Spain, Italy and France

Costa Cruises. Cruise the Med from R7 980pp sharing. Rate includes seven nights on board Costa Diadema, all meals and entertainment. Itinerary: Barcelona-Palma Mallorca-Civitavecchia-Savona-Marseilles. Set departure November 21.

7. Madagascar

Tribe Communications. 10-day kite surfing package from R33 100pp sharing. Rate includes

return economy flights from Johannesburg to Antananarivo, return domestic flight to Diego, taxes, overnight at Relais Des Plateaux Hotel in a double room, eight nights' accommodation at Lakana Hotel with breakfast and dinner daily. Valid for travel until July 31.

9. India

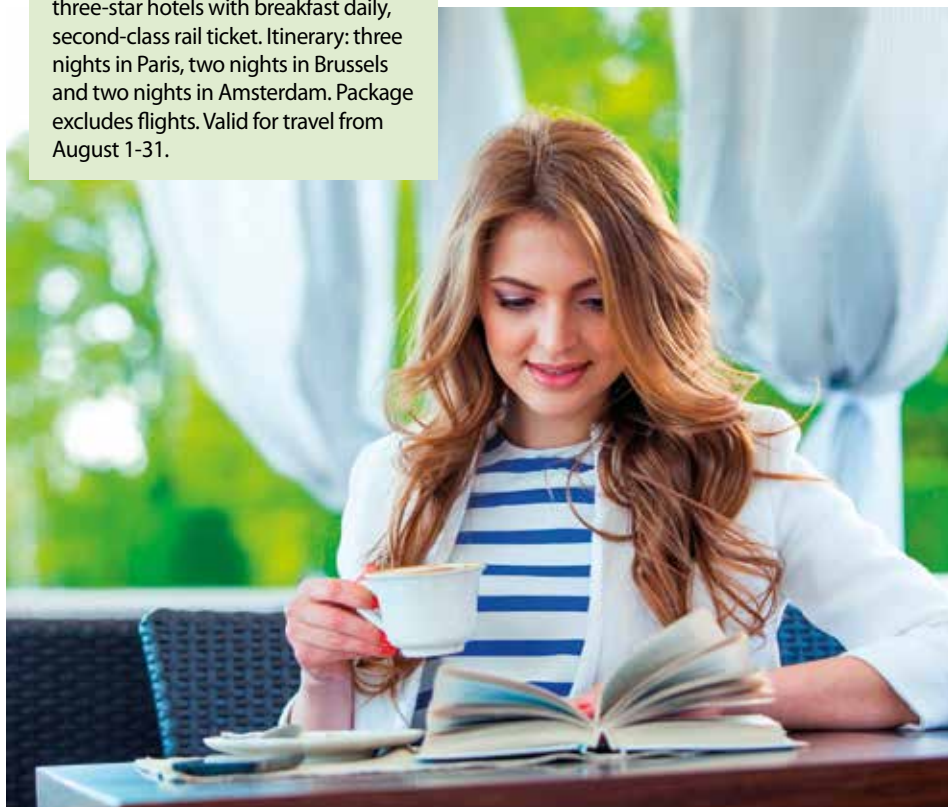
AYS Travels. South India tour from R13 585pp sharing. Rate includes return transfers, 14 nights' accommodation with breakfast daily, tour guide and taxes. Itinerary: Chennai-Bangalore-Mysore-Ooty-Cochin-Alleppey-Kumarakom-Kovalam. Excludes international flights. Valid for travel until September 15.

10. Bali

Checkout Tours. Seven-night special from R11 845pp sharing. Offer includes return flights from Johannesburg, taxes, return transfers, accommodation at the Wina Holiday Villa Kuta with breakfast daily, two full-day tours and one half-day tour. Valid for travel until November 30.

8. France, Belgium and Netherlands

United Europe. Rail and stay special from R11 670pp sharing. Rate includes seven nights' accommodation in three-star hotels with breakfast daily, second-class rail ticket. Itinerary: three nights in Paris, two nights in Brussels and two nights in Amsterdam. Package excludes flights. Valid for travel from August 1-31.



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